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WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE'S
HAMLET PRINCE OF DENMARK

TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS.

HAMLET,
PRINCE OF DENMARK
WITH NOTES ORIGINAL AND SELECTED

BY

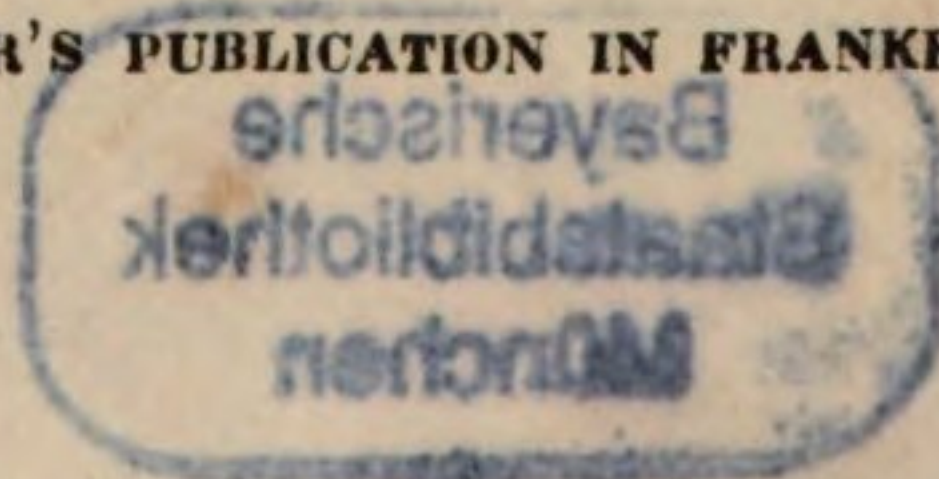
SAMUEL WELLER SINGER, F. S. A.

THIRD EDITION.

LEIPZIG,

PRINTED FOR C. R. KERSTEN.

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PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

THE original story on which this play is built may be found in Saxo Grammaticus, the Danish historian. From thence Belleforest adopted it in his collection of novels, in seven volumes, which he began in 1564, and continued to publish through succeeding years. It was from Belleforest that the old black letter prose 'Hystorie of Hamblet' was translated; the earliest edition of which, known to the commentators, was dated in 1608; but it is supposed that there were earlier impressions.

The following passage is found in an Epistle, by Thomas Nashe, prefixed to Greene's *Arcadia*, which was published in 1589: — 'I will turn back to my first text of studies of delight, and talk a little in friendship with a few of our rival translators. It is a common practice now a-days, among a sort of shifting companions, that runne through every art and thrive by none, to leave the trade of *Noverint* [i. e. the law] whereunto they were born, and busie themselves with the endeavours of art, that could scarcely latinize their neck verse, if they should have neede; yet English *Seneca*, read by candle-light, yeelds many good sentences, as *Bloud is a beggar*, and so forth: and if you entreat him faire in a frosty morning, he will affoord you whole *Hamlets*, I should say, Handfuls of tragical speeches. But O grief! *Tempus edax rerum* — what is it that will last always? The sea exhaled by drops will in continuance be drie; and *Seneca*, let bloud line by line, and page by page, at length must needs die to our stage.'

It is manifest from this passage that some play on the story of Hamlet had been exhibited before the year 1589. Malone thinks that it was not Shakspeare's drama, but an elder performance on which, with the aid of the old prose History of Hamblet, his tragedy was formed.

In a tract, entitled 'Wits Miserie, or the World's Madnesse, discovering the incarnate Devils of the Age,' published by Thomas Lodge in 1596, one of the devils is said to be 'a foule lubber, and looks as pale as the vizard of the *ghost*, who cried so miserably at the theatre, *Hamlet, revenge*.' But it is supposed that this also may refer to an elder performance.

Dr. Percy possessed a copy of Speght's edition of Chaucer, which had been Gabriel Harvey's, who had written his name and the date, 1598, both at the beginning and end of the volume, and many remarks in the intermediate leaves; among which are these words: — 'The younger sort take much delight in Shakspeare's *Venus and Adonis*; but his *Lucrece*, and his tragedy of *Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke*, have it in them to please the wiser sort.' Malone doubts whether this was written in 1598, because *translated Tasso* is named in another note; but it is not necessary that the allusion should be to Fairfax's translation, which was not printed till 1600: it may

refer to the version of the first five books of the Jerusalem, published by R. C[arew] in 1594.

We may therefore safely place the date of the first composition of Hamlet at least as early as 1597; and, for reasons adduced by Mr. George Chalmers, we may presume that it was revised, and the additions made to it in the year 1600.

The first entry on the Stationers' books is by James Roberts, July 26, 1602; and a copy of the play in its first state, printed for N. L. and John Trundell, in 1602, has recently been discovered. As in the case of the earliest impressions of Romeo and Juliet, and The Merry Wives of Windsor, this edition of Hamlet appears to have been either printed from an imperfect manuscript of the prompt books, or the playhouse copy, or stolen from the author's papers. It is next to impossible that it can have been taken down during the representation, as some have supposed was the case with the other two plays.

The variations of this early copy from the play of Hamlet, in its improved state, are too numerous and striking to admit a doubt of the play having been subsequently revised, amplified, and altered by the poet. There are even some variations in the plot; the principal of which are, that Horatio announces to the Queen Hamlet's unexpected return from his voyage to England; and that the Queen is expressly declared to be innocent to any participation in the murder of Hamlet's father, and privy to his intention of revenging his death. There are also some few lines and passages which do not appear in the revised copy. The principal variations are noticed in the course of the notes. *)

It again issued from the press in 1604, in its corrected and amended state, and in the title-page is stated to be 'newly imprinted, and enlarged to almost as much again as it was, according to the true and perfect copy.' From these words Malone had drawn the natural conclusion that a former less perfect copy had issued from the press: but his star was not propitious; he never saw it. Though it is said to have formed part of the collection of Sir Thomas Hanmer, it only came to light at the commencement of the present year [1825]; too late, alas! even to gratify the enthusiasm of his zealous friend, that worthy man, James Boswell; upon whom devolved the office of giving to the world the accumulated labours of Malone's latter years, devoted to the illustration of Shakspeare.

The character of Hamlet has been frequently discussed, and with a variety of contradictory opinions. Johnson and Steevens have made several animadversions upon some parts of his conduct. A celebrated writer of Germany has very skilfully pointed out the cause of the defects in Hamlet's character, which unfit him for the dreadful office to which he is called. 'It is clear to me (says Goethe) that Shakspeare's intention was to exhibit the effects of a great action, imposed as a duty upon a mind too feeble for its accomplishment. In this sense I find the character consistent throughout. Here is an oak planted in a china vase, proper to receive only the most delicate flowers. The roots strike out, and the vessel flies to pieces. A pure, noble, highly moral disposition, but without

*) There are some singular variations in the names of the Dramatis Personae. *Corambis* and *Montano* are the names given to the *Polonius* and *Reynaldo* of the revised play; for *Rosencrantz* and *Guildestern* we have *Rossencraft* and *Gilderstone*; and *Osrick* is merely designated a *Braggart Gentleman*.

that energy of soul which constitutes the hero, sinks under a load which it can neither support nor resolve to abandon altogether. *All his obligations are sacred to him; but this alone is above his powers! An impossibility is required at his hands; not an impossibility in itself, but that which is so to him. Observe how he shifts, turns, hesitates, advances, and recedes! how he is continually reminded and reminding himself of his great commission, which he, nevertheless in the end, seems almost entirely to lose sight of, and this without ever recovering his former tranquillity.*)*

Dr. Akenside suggested that the madness of Hamlet is not altogether feigned; and the notion has of late been revived. Dr. Ferriar, in his *Essay towards a Theory of Apparitions*, has termed the state of mind which Shakspeare exhibits to us in *Hamlet*, — as the consequence of conflicting passions and events operating on a frame of acute sensibility, — *latent lunacy*.

'It has often occurred to me (says Dr. F.) that Shakspeare's character of Hamlet can only be understood on his principle: — He feigns madness for political purposes, while the poet means to represent his understanding as really (and unconsciously to himself) unhinged by the cruel circumstances in which he is placed. The horror of the communication made by his father's spectre, the necessity of belying his attachment to an innocent and deserving object, the certainty of his mother's guilt, and the supernatural impulse by which he is goaded to an act of assassination abhorrent to his nature, are causes sufficient to overwhelm and distract a mind previously disposed "to weakness and to melancholy," and originally full of tenderness and natural affection. By referring to the play it will be seen that his real insanity is only developed after the mock play. Then, in place of a systematic conduct, conducive to his purposes, he becomes irresolute, inconsequent; and the plot appears to stand unaccountably still. Instead of striking at his object, he resigns himself to the current of events, and sinks at length ignobly under the stream.' **)

A comedian of considerable talents has entered at large into the question of Hamlet's madness, and has endeavoured to show that the poet meant to represent him as insane. †) Mr. Boswell, on the contrary, in a very judicious and ingenious review of Hamlet's character, combats the supposition, and thinks it entirely without foundation. He argues that 'the sentiments which fall from Hamlet in his soliloquies, or in confidential communication with Horatio, evince not only a sound but an acute and vigorous understanding. His misfortunes, indeed, and a sense of shame, from the hasty and incestuous marriage of his mother, have sunk him into a state of *weakness and melancholy*; but though *his mind is enfeebled*, it is by no means deranged. It would have been little in the manner of Shakspeare to introduce two persons in the same play whose intellects were disordered; but he has rather, in this instance, as in *King Lear*, a second time effected what, as far as I can recollect, no other writer has ever ventured to attempt — the exhibition on the same scene of real and fictitious madness in contrast with each other. In carrying his design into execution, Hamlet feels no difficulty in imposing upon the King, whom he detests; or upon Polonius, and his schoolfellows, whom he despises; but the

*) William Meister's *Apprenticeship*, b. iv. ch. 13.

**) *Essay on the Theory of Apparitions*, p. 111 — 115.

†) On the Madness of Hamlet, by Mr. W. Farren. *London Magazine*, for April, 1824.

case is very different indeed in his interviews with Ophelia; aware of the submissive mildness of her character, which leads her to be subject to the influence of her father and her brother, he cannot venture to entrust her with his secret. In her presence, therefore, he has not only to assume a disguise, but to restrain himself from those expressions of affection which a lover must find it most difficult to repress in the presence of his mistress. In this tumult of conflicting feelings, he is led to overact his part, from a fear of falling below it; and thus gives an appearance of rudeness and harshness to that which is, in fact, a painful struggle to conceal his tenderness.*)

Mr. Richardson, in his *Essay on the Character of Hamlet*, has well observed that 'the spirit of that remarkable scene with Ophelia, where he tells her, "get thee to a nunnery," is frequently misunderstood; and especially by the players. At least it does not appear to have been the poet's intention that the air and manner of Hamlet in this scene should be perfectly grave and serious; nor is there any thing in the dialogue to justify the grave and tragic tone with which it is frequently spoken. Let Hamlet be represented as delivering himself in a light and airy, unconcerned and thoughtless manner, and the rudeness so much complained of will disappear.' His conduct to Ophelia is intended to confirm and publish the notion he would convey of his pretended insanity, which could not be marked by any circumstance so strongly as that of treating her with harshness or indifference. The sincerity and ardour of his passion for her had undergone no change: he could not explain himself to her; and, in the difficult and trying circumstances in which he was placed, had therefore no alternative.

The poet indeed has marked with a master hand the amiable and polished character of Hamlet. Ophelia designates him as having been '— the glass of fashion, and the mould of form;' and though circumstances have unsettled him, and thrown over his natural disposition the clouds of melancholy, the kindness of his disposition and his natural hilarity break through on every occasion which arises to call them forth.

Mr. Boswell has remarked, that 'the scene with the grave-diggers shows, in a striking point of view, his good-natured affability. The reflections which follow afford new proofs of his amiable character. The place where he stands, the frame of his own thoughts, and the objects which surround him, suggest the vanity of all human pursuits; but there is nothing harsh or caustic in his satire; his observations are dictated rather by feelings of sorrow than of anger; and the sprightliness of his wit, which misfortune has repressed, but cannot altogether extinguish, has thrown over the whole a truly pathetic cast of humorous sadness. Those gleams of sunshine, which serve only to show us the scattered fragments of a brilliant imagination, crushed and broken by calamity, are much more affecting than a long uninterrupted train of monotonous woe.'

'Ophelia is a character almost too exquisitely touching to be dwelt upon. Oh, rose of May; oh, flower too soon faded! Her love, her madness, her death, are described with the truest touches of tenderness and pathos. It is a character which nobody but Shakspeare could have drawn in the way that he has done; and to the conception of which there is not the smallest approach, except in some of the old romantic ballads.'**)

*) Boswell's edition of Malone's Shakspeare, vol vii. p. 536.

**) Hazlitt's Characters of Shakspeare's Plays, p. 112.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

CLAUDIUS, King of Denmark.

HAMLET, Son to the former, and Nephew to the present King.

POLONIUS, Lord Chamberlain.

HORATIO, Friend to Hamlet.

LAERTES, Son to Polonius.

VOLTIMAND,

CORNELIUS,

ROSENCRANTZ,

GUILDENSTERN,

OSRIC, a Courtier.

Another Courtier.

A Priest.

MARCELLUS,

BERNARDO,

FRANCISCO, a Soldier.

REYNALDO, Servant to Polonius.

A Captain. An Ambassador.

Ghost of Hamlet's Father.

FORTINBRAS, Prince of Norway.

GERTRUDE, Queen of Denmark, and Mother to Hamlet.

OPHELIA, Daughter to Polonius.

Lords, Ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Players, Grave-diggers,
Sailors, Messengers, and other Attendants.

SCENE — Elsinore.

HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK.

ACT I.

SCENE I. Elsinore. *A Platform before the Castle.*

FRANCISCO *on his Post.* Enter to him BERNARDO.

Bernardo.

Who's there?

Fran. Nay, answer me¹; stand, and unfold Yourself.

Ber. Long live the king!

Fran. Bernardo?

Ber. He.

Fran. You come most carefully upon your hour.

Ber. 'Tis now struck twelve; get thee to bed, Francisco.

Fran. For this relief, much thanks: 'tis bitter cold, And I am sick at heart.

Ber. Have you had quiet guard?

Fran. Not a mouse stirring.

Ber. Well, good night.
If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,
The rivals² of my watch, bid them make haste.

¹ i. e. *me* who am already on the watch, and have a right to demand the watchword; which appears to have been, 'Long live the king.'

² Shakspeare uses *rivals* for *associates*, *partners*; and *competitor* has the same sense throughout these plays. It is the original sense of *rivalis*. The etymology was pointed out by Acro Grammaticus in his *Scholia* on Horace: 'A rivo dicto rivalet qui in agris rivum

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.

Fran. I think, I hear them. — Stand, ho! Who is there?

Hor. Friends to this ground.

Mar. And liegemen to the Dane.

Fran. Give you good night.

Mar. O, farewell, honest soldier:
Who hath reliev'd you?

Fran. Bernardo hath my place.
Give you good night. [*Exit FRANCISCO.*

Mar. Holla! Bernardo!

Ber. Say.
What, is Horatio there?

Hor. A piece of him.

Ber. Welcome, Horatio; welcome, good Marcellus.

Hor. What, has this thing appear'd again to-night?

Ber. I have seen nothing.

Mar. Horatio says, t'is but our fantasy;
And will not let belief take hold of him,
Touching this dreadful sight, twice seen of us;
Therefore I have entreated him along,
With us to watch the minutes of this night;
That, if again this apparition come,
He may approve³ our eyes, and speak to it.

Hor. Tush! tush! 'twill not appear.

Ber. Sit down awhile;
And let us once again assail your ears,
That are so fortified against our story,
What we two nights have seen.

Hor. Well, sit we down,
And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.

Ber. Last night of all,
When yon same star, that's westward from the pole,

haberent communem, et propter enim saepe discrepabant.' Hanmer applied this explanation: — 'Rivals, in Latin, being originally applied to proprietors of neighbouring lands parted only by a brook, which belonged equally to both, and so signified *partners*:' this partnership led to contests; and hence the word came to signify persons contending for the same object.

³ To approve or confirm. 'Ratum habere aliquid.' — *Baret*.

Had made his course to illume that part of heaven
Where now it burns, Marcellus, and myself,
The bell then beating one, —

Mar. Peace, break thee off; look, where it comes
again!

Enter Ghost.

Ber. In the same figure like the king that's dead.

Mar. Thou art a scholar, speak to it, Horatio⁴.

Ber. Looks it not like the king? mark it, Horatio.

Hor. Most like: — it harrows⁵ me with fear, and
wonder.

Ber. It would be spoke to.

Mar. Speak to it, Horatio.

Hor. What art thou, that usurp'st this time of night,
Together with that fair and warlike form
In which the majesty of buried Denmark
Did sometimes march? by heaven I charge thee, speak.

Mar. It is offended.

Ber. See! it stalks away.

Hor. Stay; speak: speak I charge thee, speak.

[Exit Ghost.]

Mar. 'Tis gone, and will not answer.

Ber. How now, Horatio? you tremble, and look pale:
Is not this something more than fantasy?
What think you of it?

Hor. Before my God, I might not this believe,
Without the sensible and true avouch
Of mine own eyes.

Mar. Is it not like the king?

⁴ It was a vulgar notion that a supernatural being could only be spoken to with effect by persons of learning; exorcisms being usually practiced by the clergy in Latin. Toby, in *The Night Walker* of Beaumont and Fletcher, says: —

‘Let’s call the butler up, for *he speaks Latin*,
And that will daunt the devil.’

⁵ The first quarto reads, ‘it horrors me.’ To *harrow* is to distress, to vex, to disturb. To *harry* and to *harass* have the same origin, from the Gothic *haer*, an armed force. Milton has the word in *Comus*: —

‘Amaz’d I stood, *harrow’d* with grief and fear.’

Hor. As thou art to thyself:
Such was the very armour he had on,
When he the ambitious Norway combated;
So frown'd he once, when in an angry parle⁶,
He smote the sledded Polack⁷ on the ice.
'Tis strange.

Mar. Thus, twice before, and jump⁸ at this dead
hour,
With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.

Hor. In what particular thought to work, I know
not⁹;

But, in the gross and scope of mine opinion,
This bodes some strange eruption to our state.

Mar. Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that
knows,

Why this same strict and most observant watch
So nightly toils the subject of the land?
And why such daily cast of brazen cannon,
And foreign mart for implements of war;
Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task
Does not divide the Sunday from the week:
What might be toward, that this sweaty haste
Doth make the night joint-labourer with the day;
Who is't, that can inform me?

Hor. That can I;
At least, the whisper goes so. Our last king,
Whose image even but now appear'd to us,
Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,
Thereto prick'd on by a most emulate pride,
Dar'd to the combat; in which our valiant Hamlet
(For so this side of our known world esteem'd him,)

⁶ *Parle*, the same as *parley*, a conference between enemies.

⁷ *Polack* was, in that age, the term for an inhabitant of Poland.

⁸ *Jump*. So the quarto of 1603, and that of 1604. The folio reads *just*. *Jump* and *just* were synonymous in the time of Shakspeare. So in Chapman's *May Day*, 1611: —

'Your appointment was *jumpe* at three with me.'

'Thou bendest neither one way nor tother, but art even *jumpe* stark naught. — *Baret*, B. 486.

⁹ That is, 'what particular train of thought to follow, I know not,' &c. The first quarto reads: —

'In what particular to work I know not.'

Did slay this Fortinbras; who, by a seal'd compáct,
 Well ratified by law and heraldry,
 Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands,
 Which he stood seiz'd of, to the conqueror:
 Against the which, a moiety competent
 Was gaged by our king: which had return'd
 To the inheritance of Fortinbras,
 Had he been vanquisher; as, by the same co-mart¹⁰,
 And carriage of the article design'd¹¹,
 His fell to Hamlet: Now, sir, young Fortinbras,
 Of unimproved mettle hot and full¹²,
 Hath in the skirts of Norway, here and there,
 Shark'd¹³ up a list of landless resolute,
 For food and diet, to some enterprise
 That hath a stomach¹⁴ in't: which is no other
 (As it doth well appear unto our state,)
 But to recover of us, by strong hand,
 And terms compulsatory, those 'foresaid lands
 So by his father lost: And this, I take it,
 Is the main motive of our preparations;
 The source of this our watch; and the chief head
 Of this post-haste and romage¹⁵ in the land.

10 *Co-mart* is the reading of the quarto of 1604; the folio reads, *covenant*. *Co-mart*, it is presumed, means a *joint bargain*. No other instance of the word is known.

11 i. e. 'and import of that article marked out, assigned or appointed for that purpose.' *Designed* is here used in the sense of *designatus*, Lat.

12 The first quarto reads, 'Of *inapproved*.' 'Of *unimproved* mettle hot and full;' i. e. of *unimpeached* or *unquestioned* courage. To *improve* anciently signified to *impeach*, to *impugn*. Thus Florio: 'Improbare, to *improve*, to *impugn*.' The French have still *improver*, with the same meaning; from *improbare*, Lat. Numerous instances of *improve* in this sense may be found in the writings of Shakspeare's time. And yet Johnson explains it, 'full of spirit, not regulated or guided by knowledge or experience,' and has been hitherto uncontradicted.

13 i. e. *snapped up* or *taken up* hastily, as the *shark-fish* collects his prey. '*Scroccare* is properly to do any thing at another man's cost, to *shark* or *shift* for any thing. *Scroccolone*, a cunning shifter or *sharker* for any thing in time of need, namely for *victuals*; a tall trencher-man, *shifting up and down* for belly cheer.' The same word also signifies to *snap*. This word has not yet lost its force in vulgar conversation.

14 *Stomach* is used for *determined purpose*.

15 *Romage*, now spelt, *rummage*, and in common use as a verb,

¹⁶ [*Ber.* I think, it be no other, but even so:
Well may it sort ¹⁷, that this portentous figure
Comes armed through our watch; so like the king
That was, and is, the question ¹⁸ of these wars.

Hor. A mote it is, to trouble the mind's eye.
In the most high and palmy ¹⁹ state of Rome,
A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,
The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets.

* * * * *

As, stars with trains of fire and dew's of blood,
Disasters in the sun; and the moist star ²¹,
Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands,
Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse.
And even the like precurse of fierce ²² events, —
As harbingers preceding still the fates,
And prologue to the omen ²³ coming on,
Have heaven and earth together demonstrated
Unto our climatures and countrymen. —]

Re-enter Ghost.

But, soft; behold! lo, where it comes again!
I'll cross it, though it blast me ²⁴. — Stay, illusion!

though not as a substantive, for making a thorough ransack or search, a busy and tumultuous movement.

¹⁶ All the lines within crotchets in this play are omitted in the folio of 1623. The title-pages of the quartos of 1604 and 1605 declare this play to be 'enlarged to almost as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect copie.'

¹⁷ i. e. fall in with the idea of, suit, accord.

¹⁸ i. e. theme, or subject.

¹⁹ i. e. victorious; the *Palm* being the emblem of victory. Chapman, in his *Middle Temple Masque*, has '*high-palm'd hearts*.'

²⁰ A line or more is here supposed to be lost.

²¹ i. e. the moon.

'Not that night-wand'ring pale and watry star.'

Marlowe's Hero and Leander.

²² i. e. terrible.

²³ *Omen* is here put by a figure of speech for *predicted event*.

²⁴ The person who crossed the spot on which a spectre was seen, became subject to its malignant influence. Among the reasons for supposing the death of Ferdinand, Earl of Derby, (who died young, in 1594), to have been occasioned by witchcraft in the following: — 'On Friday there appeared a tall man, who twice

If thou hast any sound, or use of voice,
 Speak to me:
 If there be any good thing to be done,
 That may to thee do ease, and grace to me,
 Speak to me:
 If thou art privy to thy country's fate,
 Which, happily, foreknowing, may avoid,
 O, speak!
 Or, if thou hast uphoarded in thy life
 Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,
 For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death,
[Cock crows.

Speak of it: — stay, and speak. — Stop it, Marcellus.

Mar. Shall I strike at it with my partisan?

Hor. Do, if it will not stand.

Ber. 'Tis here!

Hor. 'Tis here!

Mar. 'Tis gone! [Exit Ghost.

We do it wrong, being so majestical,
 To offer it the show of violence;
 For it is, as the air, invulnerable,
 And our vain blows malicious mockery.

Ber. It was about to speak, when the cock crew.

Hor. And then it started like a guilty thing
 Upon a fearful summons. I have heard,
 The cock, that is the trumpet of the morn,
 Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat
 Awake the god of day; and at his warning,
 Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,
 The extravagant and erring²⁵ spirit hies

crossed him swiftly; and when the earl came to the place where he saw this man he fell sick. — *Lodge's Illustrations of English History*. vol. iii. p. 48.

Johnson remarks that the speech of Horatio to the spectre is very elegant and noble, and congruous to the common traditions of the causes of apparitions.

²⁵ 'The *extravagant* and *erring* spirit.' 'Extra-vagans, wandering about, going beyond bounds.' Thus in *Othello*: —

'To an *extravagant* and wheeling stranger.'

It is remarkable that *stravagant* is the reading of the first quarto, which Steevens points out as used in the sense of *vagrant*. 'They took me up for a *stravagant*.' This is the '*stravagare*' of the Ita-

To his confine: and of the truth herein
This present object made probation.

Mar. It faded on the crowing of the cock²⁶.
Some say, that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
This bird of dawning singeth all night long:
And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad;
The nights are wholesome: then no planets strike,
No fairy takes²⁷, nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallow'd and so gracious²⁸ is the time.

Hor. So have I heard, and do in part believe it.
But, look, the morn²⁹, in russet mantle clad,
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill:
Break we our watch up; and, by my advice,
Let us impart what we have seen to-night
Unto young Hamlet: for, upon my life,
This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him:
Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it,
As needful in our loves, fitting our duty?

Mar. Let's do't, I pray; and I this morning know
Where we shall find him most convenient. [*Exeunt.*]

lians; 'to wander, to gad, or stray beyond or out of the way.'
Thus in a *Midsummer Night's Dream*: —

'And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger,
At whose approach, ghosts *wandering* here and there
Troop home.'

Erring is *erraticus*, straying or roving up and down. Mr. Douce has justly observed that 'the epithets *extravagant* and *erring* are highly poetical and appropriate, and seem to prove that Shakspeare was not altogether ignorant of the Latin language.'

26 This is a very ancient superstition. Philostratus, giving an account of the apparition of Achilles' shade to Apollonius of Tyanna, says, 'that it vanished with a little gleam as soon as the cock crowed.' There is a Hymn of Prudentius, and another of St. Ambrose, in which it is mentioned; and there are some lines in the latter very much resembling Horatio's speech. Mr. Douce has given them in his illustrations of Shakspeare.

27 i. e. No fairy *blasts*, or *strikes*. Thus in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act iv. Sc. 4: —

'And there he blasts the tree and takes the cattle.'
See note on that passage.

28 It has already been observed that *gracious* is sometimes used by Shakspeare for *graced*, *favoured*. Vide note on *As You Like It*, Act i. Sc. 2.

29 First quarto, 'sun.'

SCENE II.

The same. A Room of State in the same.

Enter the King, Queen, HAMLET, POLONIUS, LAERTES, VOLTIMAND, CORNELIUS, Lords, and Attendants.

King. Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death
The memory be green: and that it us befitted
To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom
To be contracted in one brow of woe;
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature,
That we with wisest sorrow think on him,
Together with remembrance of ourselves.
Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,
The imperial jointress of this warlike state,
Have we, as 'twere, with a defeated joy, —
With one auspicious, and one dropping eye¹;
With mirth in funeral, and with dirge in marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight and dole², —
Taken to wife: nor have we herein barr'd
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone
With this affair along: — For all, our thanks.

Now follows, that you know, young Fortinbras, —
Holding a weak supposal of our worth:
Or thinking, by our late dear brother's death,
Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,
Colleagu'd³ with this dream of his advantage,
He hath not fail'd to pester us with message,
Importing the surrender of those lands
Lost by his father, with all bands⁴ of law,
To our most valiant brother. — So much for him.

¹ Thus the folio. The quarto reads: —

'With an auspicious and a dropping eye.'

The same thought occurs in *The Winter's Tale*: — 'She hat *one eye declined* for the loss of her husband, *another elevated* that the oracle was fulfilled.' There is an old proverbial phrase, 'To laugh with one eye, and cry with the other.'

² i. e. grief, from *dolor*, Latin.

³ i. e. united to this strange fancy of, &c.

⁴ The folio reads, *bonds*; but *bands* and *bonds* signified the same thing in the poet's time.

Now for ourself, and for this time of meeting.
 Thus much the business is: We have here writ
 To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras, —
 Who, impotent and bed-rid, scarcely hears
 Of this his nephew's purpose, — to suppress
 His further gait⁵ herein; in that the levies,
 The lists, and full proportions, are all made
 Out of his subject: — and we here despatch
 You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltimand,
 For bearers of this greeting to old Norway;
 Giving to you no further personal power
 To business with the king, more than the scope
 Of these related articles allow⁶.

Farewell; and let your haste commend your duty.

Cor. Vol. In that, and all things, will we show our
 duty.

King. We doubt it nothing; heartily farewell.

[*Exeunt VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.*]

And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?
 You told us of some suit; What ist't, Laertes?
 You cannot speak of reason to the Dane,
 And lose your voice: What would'st thou beg, Laertes,
 That shall not be my offer, not thy asking?
 The head is not more native to the heart,

⁵ *Gait* here signifies *course, progress*. *Gait* for road, way, path, is still in use in the north. We have this word again in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act v. Sc. 2: —

'Every fairy takes his *gait*.'

⁶ The folio reads, 'More than the scope of these *dilated* articles allow.' I have not scrupled to read *related*, upon the authority of the first quarto, as more intelligible. Malone says, 'the poet should have written *allows*;' but the grammar and practice of Shakspeare's age was not strict in the concordance of plural and singular in noun and verb; and numerous examples might be adduced from his cotemporaries to prove this. The question is, Are the writers of that time to be tried by modern rules of grammar, with which they were not acquainted? Steevens, with a sweeping assertion, which no one conversant with MSS. of the time will allow, would attribute all such inaccuracies to illiterate transcribers or printers. We have Malone's assertion, that such *errors* are to be met with in almost every page of the first folio. The first quarto reads: —

'——— no further personal power
 To business with the king
 Than those *related* articles do shew.'

The hand more instrumental to the mouth,
Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father⁷.
What would'st thou have, Laertes?

Laer. My dread lord,
Your leave and favour to return to France;
From whence though willingly I came to Denmark,
To show my duty in your coronation;
Yet now, I must confess, that duty done,
My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France,
And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

King. Have you your father's leave? What says
Polonius?

Pol. He hath, my lord [wrung from me my slow
leave,
By laboursome petition; and, at last,
Upon his will I seal'd my hard consent:]
I do beseech you, give him leave to go.

King. Take thy fair hour, Laertes; time be thine,
And thy best graces; spend it at thy will⁸, —
But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son, — —

Ham. A little more than kin, and less than kind⁹.
[*Aside.*

King. How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

Ham. Not so, my lord, I am too much i'the sun¹⁰.

Queen. Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.

⁷ The various parts of the body enumerated are not more *allied*, more necessary to each other, than the throne of Denmark (i. e. the king) is bound to your father to do him service.

⁸ In the first quarto this passage stands thus: —

King. With all our heart, Laertes, fare thee well.

Laert. I in all love and dutie take my leave.

[*Exit.*

The king's speech may be thus explained: — 'Take an auspicious hour, Laertes; be your time your own, and thy best virtues guide thee in spending of it at thy will. Johnson thought that we should read, 'And my best graces.' The editors had rendered this passage doubly obscure by erroneously placing a colon at graces.

⁹ *Kind* is the Teutonic word for *child*. If we understand *Kind* in this ancient sense, then the meaning will be — — *I am more than thy kinsman, for I am thy step-son; being such I am less near to thee than thy natural offspring*, and therefore not entitled to the appellation of son, which you have now given me.

¹⁰ It is probable that a quibble is intended between *sun* and *son*. The old spelling is *sonne*.

Do not, for ever, with thy vailed lids ¹¹
 Seek for thy noble father in the dust:
 Thou know'st, 'tis common; all, that live, must die,
 Passing through nature to eternity.

Ham. Ay, madam, it is common.

Queen.

If it be,

Why seems it so particular with thee?

Ham. Seems, madam! nay, it is; I know not seems.
 'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
 Nor customary suits of solemn black,
 Nor windy suspiration of forc'd breath,
 No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
 Nor the dejected haviour of the visage,
 Together with all forms, modes, shows of grief,
 That can denote me truly: These, indeed, seem,
 For they are actions that a man might play;
 But I have that within, which passeth show;
 These, but the trappings and the suits of woe.

King. 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature,
 Hamlet,

To give these mourning duties to your father:
 But, you must know, your father lost a father;
 That father lost, lost his ¹²; and the survivor bound
 In filial obligation, for some term
 To do obsequious sorrow ¹³. But to perséver
 In obstinate condolement ¹⁴, is a course
 Of impious stubbornness; 'tis unmanly grief:
 It shows a will most incorrect to heaven ¹⁵;
 A heart unfortified, or mind impatient;
 An understanding simple and unschool'd:
 For what, we know, must be, and is as common
 As any the most vulgar thing to sense,

¹¹ i. e. with lowering eyes, cast down eyes.

¹² i. e. your father lost a father (your grandfather), which lost grandfather also lost his father. The first quarto reads, 'That father dead, lost his' —

¹³ Obsequious sorrow is dutiful, observant sorrow. Shakspeare seems to have used this word generally with an allusion to obsequies, or funeral rites.

¹⁴ Condolement for grief.

¹⁵ 'It shows a will most undisciplined towards heaven.'

Why should we, in our peevish opposition,
 Take it to heart? Fye! 'tis a fault to heaven,
 A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
 To reason most absurd; whose common theme
 Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried,
 From the first corse, till he that died to-day,
This must be so. We pray you, throw to earth
 This unprevailing¹⁶ woe; and think of us
 As of a father: for let the world take note,
 You are the most immediate to our throne;
 And with no less nobility of love¹⁷,
 Than that which dearest father bears his son,
 Do I impart¹⁸ toward you. For your intent
 In going back to school in Wittenberg,
 It is most retrograde to our desire:
 And, we beseech you, bend¹⁹ you to remain
 Here, in the cheer and comfort of our eye,
 Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

Queen. Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet;
 I pray thee, stay with us, go not to Wittenberg.

Ham. I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

King. Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply;
 Be as ourself in Denmark. — Madam, come;
 This gentle and unforc'd accord of Hamlet
 Sits smiling to my heart: in grace whereof
 No jocund health, that Denmark drinks to-day,
 But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell;

¹⁶ *Unprevailing* was used in the sense of *unavailing* as late as Dryden's time. 'He may often prevail himself of the same advantages in English.' — *Essay on Dramatic Poetry*, 1st ed.

'And dyvers noble victoryes, as the history doth express,
 That he atchyved to the honor of the town,
 Could not him *prevayle* whan Fortune lyst to frown.'

Metrical Visions, by G. Cavendish, p. 81.

¹⁷ This was a common form of figurative expression. The Ghost, describing his affection for the Queen, says: —

'To me, whose love was of that dignity.'

¹⁸ i. e. *dispense*, *bestow*. Thus Dryden: —

'High state and honours to others impart,
 But give me your heart.'

¹⁹ To *bend* is to *incline*. 'The moste parte bende to, &c: In hoc consilium maxime inclinant, &c. — *Baret*.

And the king's rouse²⁰ the heaven shall bruit again,
Respeaking earthly thunder. Come away.

[*Exeunt* King, Queen, Lords, &c. POLONIUS,
and LAERTES.

Ham. O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw, and resolve²¹ itself into a dew!
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
His canon²² 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! O God!
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world!
Fye on't! O fye! 'tis an unweeded garden,
That grows to seed; things rank, and gross in nature,
Possess it merely²³. That it should come to this!
But two months dead! — nay, not so much, not two:
So excellent a king; that was, to this,
Hyperion²⁴ to a satyr: so loving to my mother,
That he might not beteem²⁵ the winds of heaven

20 The quarto of 1603 reads: —

“The rouse the king shall drink unto the prince.”

A *rouse* appears to have been a deep draught to the health of any one, in which it was customary to empty the glass or vessel. Its etymology is uncertain; but I suspect it to be only an abridgment of *carouse*, which is used in the same sense. — See *Peacham's Complete Gentleman*, 1627, p. 194.

Carouse seems to have come to us from the French, who again appear to have derived it from the German *gar-auss*, to drink all out: at least so we may judge from the following passage in Rabelais, B. iii. Prologue: — ‘*Enfans, beuvez a plein godets. Si bon ne vous semble, laissez le. Je ne suis de ces importuns lifrelofres, qui par force, par outrage, et violence contraignent les gentils compaignons trinquer, boire caraus, et allauz.*’

The reader may consult Mr. Gifford's *Massinger*, vol. i. p. 240.

21 To *resolve* had anciently the same meaning as to *dissolve*. ‘To thaw or *resolve* that which is frozen; *regelo*. — The snow is *resolved* and melted. To till the ground, and *resolve* it into dust.’ — *Cooper*. This is another word in a Latin sense; but it is not peculiar to Shakspeare.

22 The old copy reads, *cannon*; but this was the old spelling of *canon*, a law or decree.

23 i. e. *absolutely, solely, wholly. Mere, Lat.*

24 *Hyperion*, or Apollo, always represented as a model of beauty, Shakspeare has been followed by Gray in the accentuation of this name: —

‘Hyperion's march and glittering shafts of war.’

Sir William Alexander and Drummond have accented it properly, *Hyperion*.

25 i. e. *deign to allow*. This word being of uncommon occurrence, it was changed to *permitted* by Rowe; and to *let e'en* by Theo-

Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!
Must I remember? why, she would hang on him,
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on: And yet, within a month, —
Let me not think on't; — Frailty, thy name is wo-
man! —

A little month; or ere those shoes were old,
With which she follow'd my poor father's body,
Like Niobe, all tears; — why she, even she, —
O heaven! a beast, that wants discourse of reason²⁶,
Would have mourn'd longer, — married with my uncle,
My father's brother; but no more like my father,
Than I to Hercules: Within a month;
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
She married: — O most wicked speed, to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!

bald. Steevens had the merit of pointing out the passage in Golding's Ovid, which settles its meaning: —

‘———— Yet could he not *beteeme*
The shape of any other bird than egle for to seeme.’
‘———— nulla tamen alite verti
Dignatur, nisi quae possit sua fulmine ferre.’

Rowe has an elegant imitation of this passage: —

‘I thought the gentlest breeze that wakes the spring
Too rough to breathe upon her.’

The word occurs again in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act. i. Sc. 2.

26 ‘Oh heaven! a beast that wants *discourse of reason*.’ Mr. Gifford, in a note on Massinger, vol. i. p. 149, is of opinion that we should read, ‘*discourse and reason*.’ It has, however, been shown by several quotations that ‘*discourse of reason*’ was the phraseology of Shakspeare's time; and, indeed, the poet again uses the same language in *Troilus and Cressida*, Act ii. Sc. 2: —

‘———— is your blood
So madly hot, that no *discourse of reason* —
———— can qualify the same.’

In the language of the schools, ‘*Discourse* is that rational act of the mind by which we deduce or infer one thing from another. *Discourse of reason* therefore may mean *ratiocination*. Brutes have not this *reasoning faculty*, though they have what has been called *instinct* and memory. Hamlet opposes the *discursive* power of the intellect of men to the instinct of brutes in Act iv. Sc. 4, which may tend to elucidate his present meaning, if the reader has any doubts. The first quarto reads, ‘a beast devoid of reason.’ We have *discourse of thought*, for the *discursive range of thought*, in *Othello*, Act iv. Sc. 2.

It is not, nor it cannot come to, good;
But break, my heart: for I must hold my tongue!

Enter HORATIO, BERNARDO, and MARCELLUS.

Hor. Hail to your lordship!

Ham. I am glad to see you well,
Horatio, — or I do forget myself.

Hor. The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.

Ham. Sir, my good friend; I'll change that name
with you.

And what make you²⁷ from Wittenberg, Horatio? —
Marcellus?

Mar. My good lord, —

Ham. I am very glad to see you; good even, sir. —
But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?

Hor. A truant disposition, good my lord.

Ham. I would not hear your enemy say so:
Nor shall you do mine ear that violence,
To make it truster of your own report
Against yourself: I know you are no truant.
But what is your affair in Elsinore?

We'll teach you to drink deep, ere you depart.

Hor. My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.

Ham. I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow-student;
I think, it was to see my mother's wedding.

Hor. Indeed, my lord, it follow'd hard upon.

Ham. Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral bak'd meats²⁸
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.
'Would I had met my dearest²⁹ foe in heaven,
Or³⁰ ever I had seen that day, Horatio! —
My father, — Methinks, I see my father.

²⁷ i. e. what *do* you. Vide note on *Love's Labour's Lost*, Act iv. Sc. 3.

²⁸ It was anciently the custom to give an entertainment at a funeral. The usage was derived from the Roman *caena funeralis*; and is not yet disused in the North, where it is called an *arvel* supper.

²⁹ Dearest, for *direst*, most dreadful, most dangerous.

³⁰ This is the reading of the quarto of 1604. The first quarto and the folio read, '*Ere* I had ever.'

Hor. Where,
My lord?

Ham. In my mind's eye, Horatio.

Hor. I saw him once, he was a goodly king.

Ham. He was a man, take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.

Hor. My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

Ham. Saw! who?

Hor. My lord, the king your father.

Ham. The king my father?

Hor. Season your admiration for a while
With an attent ear; till I may deliver,
Upon the witness of these gentlemen,
This marvel to you.

Ham. For God's love, let me hear.

Hor. Two nights together had these gentlemen,
Marcellus and Bernardo, on their watch,
In the dead waste and middle of the night³¹,
Been thus encounter'd. A figure like your father,
Armed to point, exactly, cap-à-pé,
Appears before them, and, with solemn march,
Goes slow and stately by them: thrice he walk'd,
By their oppress'd and fear-surprised eyes,
Within his truncheon's length; whilst they, distill'd³²
Almost to jelly with the act of fear,
Stand dumb, and speak not to him. This to me
In dreadful secrecy impart they did;
And I with them, the third night kept the watch:
Where, as they had deliver'd, both in time,
Form of the thing, each word made true and good,

31 The first quarto, 1603, has: —

'In the dead *vast* and middle of the night.'

I suffer the following note to stand as I had written it previous to the discovery of that copy.

We have 'that *vast* of night' in *The Tempest*, Act i. Sc. 2. Shakespeare has been unjustly accused of intending a quibble here between *waist* and *waste*. There appears to me nothing incongruous in the expression; on the contrary, by 'the *dead waste* and *middle* of the night,' I think, we have a forcible image of the void stillness of midnight.

32 The folio reads, *bestill'd*.

The apparition comes; I knew your father;
These hands are not more like.

Ham. But where was this?

Hor. My lord, upon the platform where we watch'd.

Ham. Did you not speak to it?

Hor. My lord, I did:

But answer made it none: yet once, methought,
It lifted up its head, and did address
Itself to motion, like as it would speak;
But, even then, the morning cock crew loud³³;
And at the sound it shrunk in haste away,
And vanish'd from our sight.

Ham. 'Tis very strange.

Hor. As I do live, my honour'd lord, 'tis true;
And we did think it writ down in our duty,
To let you know of it.

Ham. Indeed, indeed, sirs, but this troubles me.
Hold you the watch to-night?

All. We do, my lord.

Ham. Arm'd, say you?

All. Arm'd, my lord.

Ham. From top to toe?

All. My lord, from head to foot.

Ham. Then saw you not
His face.

Hor. O, yes, my lord; he wore his beaver³⁴ up.

Ham. What, look'd he frowningly?

Hor. A countenance more
In sorrow than in anger.

³³ 'It is a most inimitable circumstance in Shakspeare so to have managed this popular idea, as to make the Ghost, which has been so long obstinately silent, and of course must be dismissed by the morning, begin or rather prepare to speak, and to be interrupted at the very critical time of the crowing of a cock. Another poet, according to custom, would have suffered his ghost tamely to vanish, without contriving this start, which is like a start of guilt: to say nothing of the aggravation of the future suspense occasioned by this preparation to speak, and to impart some mysterious secret. Less would have been expected if nothing had been promised.' — *T. Warton*.

³⁴ That part of the helmet which may be lifted up. Mr. Douce has given representations of the beaver, and other parts of a helmet, and fully explained them in his *Illustrations*, vol. i. p. 443.

Ham. Pale, or red?

Hor. Nay, very pale.

Ham. And fix'd his eyes upon you?

Hor. Most constantly.

Ham. I would, I had been there.

Hor. It would have much amaz'd you.

Ham. Very like,

Very like: Stay'd it long?

Hor. While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.

Mar. Ber. Longer, longer.

Hor. Not when I saw it.

Ham. His beard was grizzl'd? no?

Hor. It was, as I have seen it in his life,
A sable silver'd³⁵.

Ham. I will watch to-night;
Perchance, 'twill walk again.

Hor. I warrant you, it will.

Ham. If it assume my noble father's person,
I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape,
And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,
If you have hitherto conceal'd this sight,
Let it be tenable³⁶ in your silence still;
And whatsoever else shall hap to-night,
Give it an understanding, but no tongue;
I will requite your loves: So, fare you well:
Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,
I'll visit you.

All. Our duty to your honour.

Ham. Your loves, as mine to you: Farewell.

[*Exeunt* HORATIO, MARCELLUS, and BERNARDO.]

My father's spirit in arms! all is not well;
I doubt some foul play: 'would, the night were come!
Till then sit still, my soul: Foul deeds will rise,
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes.

[*Exit.*]

35 'And sable curls all silvered o'er with white.'

Shakspeare's Twelfth Sonnet.

36 The quarto of 1603 reads *tenible*. The other quartos *tenable*.
The folio of 1623 *treble*.

SCENE III. *A Room in Polonius' House.**Enter LAERTES and OPHELIA.*

Laer. My necessities are embark'd; farewell:
And, sister, as the winds give benefit,
And convoy is assistant, do not sleep,
But let me hear from you.

Oph. Do you doubt that?

Laer. For Hamlet, and the trifling of his favour,
Hold it a fashion, and a toy in blood;
A violet in the youth of primy nature,
Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,
The perfume and suppliance of a minute¹;
No more.

Oph. No more but so?

Laer. Think it no more:
For nature, crescent, does not grow alone
In thews², and bulk; but, as this temple waxes,
The inward service of the mind and soul
Grows wide withal. Perhaps, he loves you now;
And now no soil, nor cautel³ doth besmirch⁴
The virtue of his will: but, you must fear,
His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own;
For he himself is subject to his birth:

¹ This is the reading of the quarto copy. The folio has —
'———— sweet, not lasting,
The suppliance of a minute.'

It is plain that *perfume* is necessary to exemplify the idea of *sweet not lasting*. 'The *suppliance of a minute*' should seem to mean *supplying* or *enduring* only that short space of time as transitory and evanescent. The simile is eminently beautiful: it is to be regretted that it should be obscured by an unusual word.

² i. e. sinews and muscular strength. Vide note on the Second Part of King Henry IV. Act iii. Sc. 2.

³ *Cautel* is cautious circumspection, subtlety, or deceit. Minsheu explains it, 'a crafty way to deceive.' Thus in a Lover's Complaint: —

'In him a plenitude of subtle matter,
Applied to *cautels*, all strange forms receives.'

And in Coriolanus: —

'—— be caught by *cautelous* baits and practice.'

'The virtue of his will' means his virtuous intentions.

⁴ *Besmirch* is besmear, or sully.

He may not, as unvalued persons do,
 Carve for himself; for on his choice depends
 The safety and health of the whole state⁵;
 And therefore must his choice be circumscribed
 Unto the voice and yielding of that body,
 Whereof he is the head: Then if he says, he loves you,
 It fits your wisdom so far to believe it,
 As he in his particular act and place
 May give his saying deed; which is no further,
 Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.
 Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain,
 If with too credent ear you list⁶ his songs;
 Or lose your heart; or your chaste treasure open
 To his unmaster'd⁷ importunity.
 Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister;
 And keep you in the rear of your affection,
 Out of the shot and danger of desire.
 The chariest⁸ maid is prodigal enough,
 If she unmask her beauty to the moon:
 Virtue itself scapes not calumnious strokes:
 The canker galls the infants of the spring,
 Too oft before their buttons be disclos'd;
 And in the morn and liquid dew of youth
 Contagious blastments are most imminent.
 Be wary then: best safety lies in fear;
 Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

Oph. I shall the effect of this good lesson keep,
 As watchman to my heart; But, good my brother,
 Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,

⁵ 'The safety and health of the whole state.' Thus the quarto of 1604. In the folio it is altered to 'The sanctity,' &c. supposing the metre defective. But *safety* is used as a trisyllable by Spenser and others. Thus Hall in his first Satire, b. iii.: —

'Nor fish can dive so deep in yielding sea,
 Though Thetis self should swear her safety.'

⁶ 'If with too credulous ear you listen to his songs.'

⁷ Licentious.

⁸ i. e. the most cautious, the most discreet. In Green's *Never too Late*, 1616: — Love requires not chastity, but that her soldiers be *chary*. And again: — 'She lives chastly enough that lives *charily*.' We have *chariness* in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*; and *unchary* in *Twelfth Night*, Act iii. Sc. 4.

Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven;
 Whilst, like a puff'd and reckless⁹ libertine,
 Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
 And recks not his own read¹⁰.

Laer. O fear me not.
 I stay too long; — But here my father comes.

Enter POLONIUS.

A double blessing is a double grace;
 Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

Pol. Yet here, Laertes! aboard, aboard, for shame;
 The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,
 And you are staid for: There, — my blessing with you;

[*Laying his Hand on LAERTES' Head.*]

And these few precepts in thy memory
 Look thou charácter¹¹. Give thy thoughts no tongue,
 Nor any unproportion'd thought his act.

Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.

The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
 Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel¹²;

But do not dull thy palm¹³ with entertainment
 Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd comrade. Beware

Of entrance to a quarrel: but, being in,

Bear it that the opposer may beware of thee.

Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice:

⁹ *Reckless*, or negligent; *Omissus animus*. — *Baret*.

¹⁰ i. e. *regards* not his own *lesson*. In *The Two Angry Women of Abington*, 1599, we have: — 'Take heed, is a good *reed*.' And in *Sternhold*, Psalm i.: —

'Blest is the man that hath not lent
 To wicked *rede* his ear.'

¹¹ i. e. mark, imprint, strongly infix. In Shakspeare's 122d Sonnet: —

'—— thy tables are within my brain
 Full *character'd* with lasting *memory*.'

And in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*: —

'———— I do conjure thee,
 Who art the table wherein all my thoughts
 Are visibly *character'd* and engraved.'

¹² The old copies read, 'with *hoops* of steel.'

¹³ 'But do not *dull thy palm*.' This figurative expression means, 'do not *blunt* thy feeling by taking every new acquaintance by the hand, or by admitting him to the intimacy of a friend.'

Take each man's censure¹⁴, but reserve thy judgment.
 Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
 But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy:
 For the apparel oft proclaims the man:
 And they in France, of the best rank and station,
 Are most select and generous, chief¹⁵ in that.
 Neither a borrower, nor a lender be:
 For loan oft loses both itself and friend,
 And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry¹⁶.
 This above all, — To thine ownself be true;
 And it must follow, as the night the day,
 Thou canst not then be false to any man.
 Farewell; my blessing season¹⁷ this in thee!

Laer. Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

Pol. The time invites you; go, your servants tend¹⁸.

Laer. Farewell, Ophelia; and remember well
 What I have said to you.

14 i. e. judgment, opinion; *censura*. Lat. Thus in King Henry VI. Part II.: —

'The king is old enough to give his *censure*.'

15 The quarto of 1603 reads: —

'Are of a most select and *generall* chief in *this*.'

The folio: —

'Are of a most select and *generous cheff*, in that.'

The other quartos give the line: —

'As of a most select and generous, cheefe in that.'

'Or of a most select and generous, cheefe in that.'

Malone has tried to torture the passage into a meaning, by supposing an allusion to the chief or upper part of a shield in heraldry. But the redundancy of the line, and discrepancy of the copies, evidently show it to be corrupt. The simple emendation by omitting of *a*, and the proper punctuation of the line, make all clear. 'The nobility of France are most select and *high-minded* (generous) *chiefly* in that;' *chief* being an adjective used adverbially. We have *generous* for high minded, noble, in Othello, and in Measure for Measure.

16 i. e. thrift, economical prudence.

17 'To season, for to *infuse*,' says Warburton. 'It is more than to infuse, it is to infix in such a manner that it may never wear out,' says Johnson. But hear one of the poet's contemporaries: — 'To season, to *temper* wisely, to make more pleasant and acceptable.' — *Baret*. This is the sense required, and is a better commentary than the *conjectures* of the learned critics, Warburton and Johnson, could supply. Thus in Act II. Sc. 1, Polonius says to Reynaldo, 'You may season it in the charge.' And in a former scene Horatio says: —

'Season your admiration for a while.'

18 Wait.

Oph. 'Tis in my memory lock'd,
And you yourself shall keep the key of it.

Laer. Farewell. [Exit LAERTES.]

Pol. What is't, Ophelia, he hath said to you?

Oph. So please you, something touching the lord
Hamlet.

Pol. Marry, well bethought:
'Tis told me, he hath very oft of late
Given private time to you; and you yourself
Have of your audience been most free and bounteous:
If it be so, (as so 'tis put on me,
And that in way of caution,) I must tell you,
You do not understand yourself so clearly,
As it behoves my daughter, and your honour:
What is between you? give me up the truth.

Oph. He hath, my lord, of late, made many tenders
Of his affection to me.

Pol. Affection? puh! you speak like a green girl,
Unsifted¹⁹ in such perilous circumstance.
Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?

Oph. I do not know, my lord, what I should think.

Pol. Marry, I'll teach you: think yourself a baby;
That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,
Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more dearly;
Or, (not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,
Wrangling it thus,) you'll tender me a fool²⁰.

Oph. My lord, he hath importun'd me with love,
In honourable fashion²¹.

Pol. Ay, fashion you may call it; go to, go to.

Oph. And hath given countenance to his speech, my
lord,
With almost all the holy vows of heaven.

19 i. e. *untried, inexperienced.*

20 Shakspeare makes Polonius play on the equivocal use of the word *tender*, which was anciently used in the sense of *regard* or *respect*, as well as in that of *offer*. The folio reads, '*roaming it thus*'; and the quarto, '*wrong it thus*.'

21 Ophelia uses *fashion* for *manner*; and Polonius equivocates upon the word, taking it in its usual acceptation, for a *transient practice*.

Pol. Ay, springes to catch woodcocks²². I do know,
 When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul
 Lends the tongue vows²³: these blazes, daughter,
 Giving more light than heat, — extinct in both,
 Even in their promise, as it is a making, —
 You must not take for fire. From this time,
 Be somewhat scanter of your maiden presence;
 Set your entreatments²⁴ at a higher rate,
 Than a command to parley. For lord Hamlet,
 Believe so much in him, That he is young;
 And with a larger tether²⁵ may he walk,
 Than may be given you: In few, Ophelia,
 Do not believe his vows: for they are brokers²⁶,
 Not of that die which their investments show,
 But mere implorators of unholy suits,
 Breathing like sanctified and pious bonds,
 The better to beguile. This is for all, —
 I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,
 Have you so slander any moment's leisure,
 As to give words or talk with the lord Hamlet.
 Look to't, I charge you; come your ways.

Oph. I shall obey, my lord. [Exeunt.]

22 This was a proverbial phrase. There is a collection of epigrams under that title: the woodcock being accounted a witless bird, from a vulgar notion that it had no brains. 'Springes to catch woodcocks' means 'arts to entrap simplicity.'

23 'How prodigal the *tongue* lends the *heart* vows,' 4to. 1603.

24 i. e. 'be more difficult of access, and let the *suits* to you for that purpose be of higher respect, than a command to parley.' How Johnson could conceive *entreatments* to signify *company*, *conversation*, I am at a loss to imagine.

25 i. e. with a *longer line*; a horse fastened by a string to a stake, is *tethered*: figuratively *with more licence*.

26 i. e. panders. *Brokage* and *to broke* was anciently to deal in business of an amatory nature by procurement. Thus in *A Lover's Complaint*: —

'Know *vows* are ever *brokers* to defiling.'

SCENE IV. *The Platform.*

Enter HAMLET, HORATIO, and MARCELLUS.

Ham. The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.

Hor. It is a nipping and an eager¹ air.

Ham. What hour now?

Hor. I think, it lacks of twelve.

Mar. No, it is struck.

Hor. Indeed? I heard it not; it then draws near the season,

Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.

[A Flourish of Trumpets, and Ordnance shot off, within.]

What does this mean, my lord?

Ham. The king doth wake to-night, and takes his rouse².

Keeps wassel³, and the swaggering up-spring⁴ reels;
And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,
The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out
The triumph of his pledge.

Hor. Is it a custom?

Ham. Ay, marry, is't:

But to my mind, — though I am native here,

¹ *Eager* was used in the sense of the French *aigre*, sharp.

² See note 20, p. 22.

³ The origin of the word *wassel* is thus related by Geoffrey of Monmouth: — '— On Vortigern's first interview with Rowena she kneeled before him, and presenting a cup of wine, said to him Lord king *waes hael*, i. e. be health, or health be to you! Vortigern, unacquainted with the Saxon language, inquired the meaning of these words, and being told that he should answer them by saying *Drinc heil*, he did so, and commanded Rowena to drink; then taking the cup from her hand he kissed the damsel and pledged her. From that time the custom remained in Britain that whoever drank to another at a feast said *Was hael*, and he that immediately after received the cup answered *Drinc heil*.' The story is also told in the Metrical Chronicle of Robert of Brunne. To keep *wassell* was to devote the time to festivity. Vide *Love's Labour's Lost*, Act v. Sc. 2. To *wake* signified to *revel at night*. Vide Florio in voce *Veggia*.

⁴ I take *up-spring* here to mean nothing more than *upstart*. Steevens, from a passage in Chapman's *Alphonsus*, thought that it might mean a *dance*.

And to the manner born, — it is a custom
 More honour'd in the breach, than the observance.
 This heavy-headed revel, east and west⁵,
 Makes us traduc'd, and tax'd of other nations:
 They clepe⁶ us, drunkards, and with swinish phrase
 Soil our addition⁷; and, indeed it takes
 From our achievements, though perform'd at height,
 The pith and marrow of our attribute.
 So, oft it chances in particular men,
 That, for some vicious mole⁸ of nature in them,
 As, in their birth (wherein they are not guilty,
 Since nature cannot choose his origin),
 By the o'ergrowth of some complexion⁹,
 Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason;
 Or by some habit, that too much o'er-leavens
 The form of plausible manners; — that these men, —
 Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect;
 Being nature's livery, or fortune's star¹⁰, —
 Their virtues (be they as pure as grace,
 As infinite as man may undergo,)

5 This and the following twenty-one lines are omitted in the folio. They had probably been omitted in representation, lest they should give offence to Anne of Denmark.

6 *Clepe*, call clypian, Sax. The Danes were indeed proverbial as drunkards, and well they might be, according to the accounts of the time. 'A lively French traveller, being asked what he had seen in Denmark, replied, "Rien de singulier, sinon qu'on y chante tous les jours *le Roi boit*," alluding to the French mode of celebrating 'Twelfth Day.' See De Brieux *Origines de quelques Coutumes*, p. 56. Heywood in his *Philocothonista*, or *The Drunkard Opened*, &c. 1635. 4to. speaking of what he calls the vinosity of nations, says of the Danes, that they have made a profession thereof from antiquity, and are the first upon record that brought their wassel bowls and elbowe deepe healthes into this land.' — *Douce*. Roger Asham, in one of his Letters, says, 'The Emperor of Germany, who had his head in the glass five times as long as any of us, never drank less than a good quart at once of Rhenish wine.' See also Howel's Letters, 8vo. 1726, p. 236. Muffet's *Health's Improvement*, 4to. 1635, p. 294. Harington's *Nugae Antiquae*, 8vo. 1604, vol. i. p. 349.

7 i. e. characterize us by a swinish epithet.

8 i. e. spot, blemish.

9 *Complexion* for humour. By *complexion* our ancestors understood the constitutions or affections of the body.

10 i. e. the influence of the planet supposed to govern our birth, &c.

Shall in the general censure¹¹ take corruption
 From that particular fault: The dram of bale
 Doth all the noble substance often doubt¹²
 To his own scandal.

Enter Ghost.

Hor. Look, my lord, it comes!

Ham. Angels and ministers of grace, defend us¹³! —
 Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damn'd¹⁴,
 Bring with thee airs from heaven, or blasts from hell,
 Be thy intents wicked, or charitable,

¹¹ i. e. judgment, opinion.

¹² The last paragraph of this speech stands in the quarto editions thus: —

'———— the dram of *eale*
 Doth all the noble substance *of a doubt*
 To his own scandal.'

Steevens reads: —

'———— The dram of *base*
 Doth all the noble substance *often dout* [i. e. do out]
 To his own scandal.'

Malone proposed: —

'———— The dram of *base*
 Doth all the noble substance *of worth dout*
 To his own scandal.'

I see no reason why *dout* should be substituted for *doubt*. The editors have unwarrantably made the same substitution in King Henry V. Act iv, Sc. 2, and then cited it as a precedent. Mr. Boswell has justly observed, that *to doubt* may mean to bring *into doubt* or *suspicion*; many words similarly formed are used by Shakespeare and his cotemporaries. Thus *to fear* is to *create fear*; *to pale* is to *make pale*; *to cease* is to *cause to cease*, &c. I have followed the emendation in other respects, though I have ventured to read *bale* (i. e. evil) instead of *base*, as nearer to the reading of the first edition.

¹³ Hamlet's speech to the apparition of his father seems to consist of three parts. When he first sees the spectre, he fortifies himself with an invocation: —

'Angels and ministers of grace, defend us!'

As the spectre approaches, he deliberates with himself, and determines that, whatever it be, he will venture to address it: —

'Be thou a spirit of health,' &c.

This he says while his father's spirit is advancing; he then, as he had determined, speaks to him, and calls him: —

'—— Hamlet,

King, father, royal Dane: O, answer me!'

Johnson.

¹⁴ 'Art thou a god, a man, or else a ghost?

Com'st thou from heaven, where bliss and solace dwell?

Or from the airie cold-engendering coast?

Or from the darksome dungeon-hold of hell?'

Acolastus, or After Wil, 1604.

Thou com'st in such a questionable¹⁵ shape,
 That I will speak to thee; I'll call thee, Hamlet,
 King, father, royal Dane: O, answer me:
 Let me not burst in ignorance! but tell,
 Why thy canóniz'd bones, hearsed in death,
 Have burst their cerements! why the sepulchre,
 Wherein we saw thee quietly in-urn'd¹⁶,
 Hath op'd his ponderous and marble jaws,
 To cast thee up again! What may this mean,
 That thou, dead corse, again, in cômplete steel¹⁷
 Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,
 Making night hideous; and we fools of nature,
 So horridly to shake our disposition¹⁸,
 With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?
 Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we do?

Hor. It beckons you to go away with it,
 As if it some impartment did desire
 To you alone.

Mar. Look, with what courteous action
 It waves you to a more removed ground:
 But do not go with it.

Hor. No, by no means.

Ham. It will not speak; then I will follow it.

Hor. Do not, my lord.

Ham. Why, what should be the fear?
 I do not set my life at a pin's fee¹⁹;
 And, for my soul, what can it do to that,
 Being a thing immortal as itself?
 It waves me forth again;—I'll follow it.

Hor. What, if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
 Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff,

¹⁵ *Questionable* must not be understood in its present acceptation of *doubtful*, but as *conversable*, inviting question or conversation; this was the most prevalent meaning of the word in Shakspeare's time.

¹⁶ Quarto 1603 — *interr'd*.

¹⁷ It appears from Olaus Wormius, cap. vii. that it was the custom to bury the Danish kings in their armour. The accentuation of *cômplete* and *canónized* on the first syllable is not peculiar to Shakspeare, but the practice of several of his cotemporaries.

¹⁸ Frame of mind.

¹⁹ 'I do not estimate my life at the value of a pin.'

That beetles²⁰ o'er his base into the sea?
 And there assume some other horrible form,
 Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason²¹,
 And draw you into madness? think of it:
 The very place puts toys²² of desperation,
 Without more motive, into every brain,
 That looks so many fathoms to the sea,
 And hears it roar beneath.

Ham. It waves me still:—
 Go on, I'll follow thee.

Mar. You shall not go, my lord.

Ham. Hold off your hands.

Hor. Be rul'd, you shall not go.

Ham. My fate cries out,
 And makes each petty artery in this body
 As hardy as the Némean lion's nerve.—

[Ghost beckons.

Still am I call'd;—unhand me, gentlemen;—

[Breaking from them.

By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets²³ me:—
 I say, away:—Go on, I'll follow thee.

[Exeunt Ghost and HAMLET.

Hor. He waxes desperate with imagination.

Mar. Let's follow; 'tis not fit thus to obey him.

Hor. Have after:—To what issue will this come?

Mar. Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

20 i. e. overhangs his base. Thus in Sidney's *Arcadia*, b. i. —
 'Hills lift up their beetle brows, as if they would overlooke the
 pleasantnesse of their under prospect.' The verb *to beetle* is appa-
 rently of Shakspeare's creation.

21 'To deprive your sovereignty of reason,' signifies to take from
 you or dispossess you of the command of reason. We have simi-
 lar instances of raising the idea of virtues or qualities by giving
 them rank in Banquo's 'royalty of nature,' and even in this play
 we have 'nobility of love,' and 'dignity of love.'

22 i. e. whims.

23 'Villains, set down the corse, or by St. Paul
 I'll make a corse of him that disobeys.'

King Richard III. Act i. Sc. 1.

To let, in old language, is to hinder, to stay, to obstruct; and still
 a current term in leases and other legal instruments.

Hor. Heaven will direct it²⁴.

Mar. Nay, let's follow him.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.

A more remote Part of the Platform.

Re-enter Ghost and HAMLET.

Ham. Whither wilt thou lead me? speak, I'll go no further.

Ghost. Mark me.

Ham. I will.

Ghost. My hour is almost come,
When I to sulphurous and tormenting flames
Must render up myself.

Ham. Alas, poor ghost!

Ghost. Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing
To what I shall unfold.

Ham. Speak, I am bound to hear.

Ghost. So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

Ham. What?

Ghost. I am thy father's spirit;
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night;
And, for the day, confin'd to fast in fires¹,
Till the foul crimes, done in my days of nature,
Are burnt and purg'd away². But that I am forbid

²⁴ Marcellus answers Horatio's question, 'To what issue will this come?' and Horatio also answers it himself with pious resignation, 'Heaven will direct it.'

¹ The first quarto reads: —

'Confin'd in flaming fire.'

The spirit being supposed to feel the same desires and appetites as when clothed in the flesh, the pains and punishments promised by the ancient moral teachers are often of a sensual nature. Chaucer in the *Persones Tale* says, 'The misese of hell shall be in defaute of mete and drinke:

'Thou shalt lye in frost and fire,
With sicknes and hunger,' &c.

The Wyll of the Devyll, blk. 1.

² Gawin Douglas really changes the Platonic hell into 'the punition of the saulis in purgatory.' Dr. Farmer thus compressed his

To tell the secrets of my prison-house,
 I could a tale unfold, whose lightest word
 Would harrow up thy soul; freeze thy young blood;
 Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres;
 Thy knotted and combined locks to part,
 And each particular hair to stand on end,
 Like quills upon the fretful porcupine:
 But this eternal blazon must not be
 To ears of flesh and blood. — List, list, O list! —
 If thou didst ever thy dear father love, — —

Ham. O heaven!

Ghost. Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder³.

Ham. Murder?

Ghost. Murder most foul, as in the best it is;
 But this most foul, strange, and unnatural.

Ham. Haste me to know it; that I, with wings as
 swift

As meditation, or the thoughts of love,
 May sweep to my revenge.

Ghost. I find thee apt;
 And duller should'st thou be than the fat weed
 That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf⁴,
 Would'st thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear:
 'Tis given out, that sleeping in mine orchard,
 A serpent stung me; so the whole ear of Denmark
 Is by a forged process of my death

account: — 'It is a nedeful thyng to suffer pains and torment; —
 sum in the wyndis, sum under the watter, and in the fire uther
 sum: thus the mony vices —

*Contrakkit in the corporis be done away
 And purgit.'*

3 There is an allusion to the ghost in this play, or in an older
 one of the same name, by Lodge in his *Wit's Miserie and the
 World's Madness*, 1596. He describes one of his Devils, by name
 Hate Virtue, as '*a foule lubber*, who looks as pale as the vizard
 of the Ghost, which cried so miserably at the theattre, *Hamlet,*
revenge.'

4 The folio reads — *rots* itself, &c. In the *Humorous Lieute-
 nant*, by Beaumont and Fletcher, we have: —

'This *dull* root pluck'd from Lethe's flood.'

Otway has a similar thought:

'—— like a coarse and useless dunghill weed
 Fix'd to one spot, and rot just as I grow.'

Rankly abus'd: but know, thou noble youth,
The serpent, that did sting thy father's life⁵,
Now wears his crown.

Ham. O, my prophetic soul! my uncle!

Ghost. Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts,
(O, wicked wit, and gifts, that have the power
So to seduce!) won to his shameful lust
The will of my most seeming virtuous queen:
O, Hamlet, what a falling-off was there!
From me, whose love was of that dignity,
That it went hand in hand even with the vow
I made to her in marriage; and to decline
Upon a wretch, whose natural gifts were poor
To those of mine!

But virtue, as it never will be mov'd,
Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven;
So lust, though to a radiant angel link'd,
Will sate itself in a celestial bed,
And prey on garbage.
But soft! methinks, I scent the morning air;
Brief let me be:—Sleeping within mine orchard,
My custom always of the afternoon,
Upon my secure⁶ hour thy uncle stole,
With juice of cursed hebenon⁷ in a vial,

⁵ Quarto 1603 — *heart*.

⁶ This is also a Latinism, *securus*, *quiet*, or *unguarded*.

⁷ *Hebenon* may probably be derived from *henbane*, the oil of which, according to Pliny, dropped into the ears, disturbs the brain: and there is sufficient evidence that it was held poisonous by our ancestors, in Anton's Satires, 1606, we have:—

'The poison'd henbane, whose cold juice doth kill.'

And Drayton, in his *Baron's Wars*, p. 51:—

'The poisoning henbane and the mandrake dread.'

The French name comes near in sound, *hannebane*. It is, however, possible that poisonous qualities may have been ascribed to *ebony*; called *ebene*, and *ebeno*, by old English writers. Marlow, in his *Jew of Malta*, speaking of noxious things, says:—

'———— The blood of Hydra, Lerna's bane

The juyce of *hebon*, and *cocytus* breath.'

The French word *hebenin*, which would be applied to any thing made from ebony, comes indeed very close to the *hebenon* of Shakspeare. In confirmation of my conjecture, I find the newly discovered quarto, 1603, reads — *hebona*.

And in the porches of mine ears did pour
 The leperous distilment: whose effect
 Holds such an enmity with blood of man,
 That, swift as quicksilver, it courses through
 The natural gates and alleys of the body;
 And, with a sudden vigour, it doth posset
 And curd, like eager⁸ droppings into milk,
 The thin and wholesome blood: so did it mine;
 And a most instant tetter bark'd about,
 Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust,
 All my smooth body.

Thus was I, sleeping; by a brother's hand,
 Of life, of crown, of queen, at once despatch'd⁹;
 Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
 Unhousel'd¹⁰, disappointed¹¹, unanel'd¹²;
 No reckoning made, but sent to my account
 With all my imperfections on my head:
 O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!
 If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not;
 Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
 A couch for luxury and damned incest.
 But, howsoever thou pursu'st this act,
 Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
 Against thy mother aught; leave her to heaven,
 And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,

⁸ In Sc. iv. we have *eager* air for sharp biting air. '*Eger* (says Baret), *sower*, *sharp*, *acidus*, *aigre*.'

⁹ Quarto 1603, *deprived*. I have elsewhere remarked that to *dispatch* and to *rid* were synonymous in Shakspeare's time.

¹⁰ *Unhousel'd* is without having received the sacrament. Thus in *Hormanni Vulgaria*, 1519: — 'He is departed without shryfte and housyll,' And in *Speculum Vitae*, MS. it is a sin —

'To receive nat once in the yeare
Howsel and schrifte with conscience clere.'

¹¹ *Disappointed* is the same as *unappointed*, and may be explained *unprepared*. A man well furnished for an enterprise is said to be well *appointed*. In *Measure for Measure*, Isabella addresses her brother, who is condemned to die, thus: —

'Therefore your best *appointment* make with speed.'

¹² *Unanel'd* is without extreme unction. Thus in *Cavendish's Life of Wolsey*, edit. 1824, p. 324, : — 'Then we began to put him in mind of Christ's passion; and sent for the abbot of the place to *anneal* him.'

To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once!
The glowworm shows the matin to be near,
And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire¹³:

Adieu, adieu, adieu! remember me. [Exit.

Ham. O all you host of heaven! O earth! What else?
And shall I couple hell? — O fye! — Hold, hold, my heart;
And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,
But bear me stiffly up! — Remember thee?
Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe¹⁴. Remember thee?
Yea, from the table of my memory¹⁵
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,
That youth and observation copied there;
And thy commandment all alone shall live
Within the book and volume of my brain,
Unmix'd with baser matter: yes, by heaven.
O most pernicious woman!
O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!
My tables, — meet it is, I set it down,
That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain;
At least, I am sure, it may be so in Denmark:

[Writing.

So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word¹⁶;
It is, *Adieu, adieu! remember me.*
I have sworn't.

¹³ *Uneffectual*, i. e. shining without heat. The use of *to pale* as a verb is rather unusual, but not peculiar to Shakspeare. It is to be found in Chaucer and our elder writers.

¹⁴ i. e. in this *head* confused with thought.

¹⁵ Thus in the Second Part of King Henry IV. Act. iv. Sc. 1: —

‘And therefore will he wipe his *tables* clean,

And keep no tell-tale in his *memory*.’

‘*Tables* or books, or registers for memorie of things,’ were then used by all ranks, and contained prepared leaves from which what was written with a silver style could easily be effaced.

¹⁶ The quarto 1603 has — ‘*Now to the words.*’ By ‘*Now to my word*’ Hamlet means now to my motto, my word of remembrance; or as it is expressed by King Richard III. *word of courage*. Steevens asserted that the allusion is to the military *watchword*. A *word*, *mot*, or *motto*, was any short sentence, such as is inscribed on a token, or under a device or coat of arms. It was a common phrase. See Ben Jonson’s Works, by Mr. Gifford, vol. ii. p. 102.

Hor. [*Within.*] My lord, my lord, — —

Mar. [*Within.*] Lord Hamlet, — —

Hor. [*Within.*] Heaven secure him!

Ham. So be it!

Mar. [*Within.*] Illo, ho, ho, my lord!

Ham. Hillo, ho, ho, boy! come, bird, come¹⁷

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.

Mar. How is't, my noble lord!

Hor. What news, my lord?

Ham. O, wonderful!

Hor. Good my lord, tell it.

Ham. No;

You will reveal it.

Hor. Not I, my lord, by heaven.

Mar. Nor I, my lord.

Ham. How say you then; would heart of man once think it?

But you'll be secret, — —

Hor. Mar. Ay, by heaven, my lord.

Ham. There's ne'er a villain, dwelling in all Denmark, But he's an arrant knave.

Hor. There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave, To tell us this.

Ham. Why, right; you are in the right; And so, without more circumstance at all, I hold it fit, that we shake hands, and part: You, as your business, and desire, shall point you; — For every man hath business, and desire, Such as it is, — and, for my own poor part, Look you, I will go pray.

Hor. These are but wild and whirling words, my lord.

¹⁷ This is the call which falconers use to their hawk in the air, when they would have him come down to them. Thus in Tyro's *Roaring Megge*, 1598: —

'Yet ere I journie, Ile go see the kyte,
Come, come, bird, come: pox on you, you can mute.'

Ham. I am sorry they offend you, heartily; yes,
'Faith, heartily.

Hor. There's no offence, my lord.

Ham. Yes, by Saint Patrick¹⁸, but there is, Horatio,
And much offence too. Touching this vision here, —
It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you;
For your desire to know what is between us,
O'er-master it as you may. And now, good friends,
As you are friends, scholars, and soldiers,
Give me one poor request.

Hor. What is't, my lord?
We will.

Ham. Never make known what you have seen to-
night.

Hor. Mar. My lord, we will not.

Ham. Nay, but swear't.

Hor. In faith,
My lord, not I.

Mar. Nor I, my lord, in faith.

Ham. Upon my sword.

Mar. We have sworn, my lord, already.

Ham. Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.

Ghost. [*Beneath.*] Swear.

Ham. Ha, ha, boy! say'st thou so? art thou there,
true-penny?

Come on, — you hear this fellow, in the cellarage, —
Consent to swear.

Hor. Propose the oath, my lord.

Ham. Never to speak of this that you have seen,
Swear by my sword¹⁹.

¹⁸ Warburton has ingeniously defended Shakspeare for making the Danish prince swear by *St. Patrick*, by observing that the whole northern world had their learning from Ireland. It is, however, more probable that the poet seized the first popular imprecation that came to his mind, without regarding whether it suited the country or character of the person to whom he gave it.

¹⁹ The custom of swearing by the sword, or rather by the cross at the upper end of it, is very ancient. In the Soliloquy of Roland, addressed to his sword, the cross which the gard and handle form is not forgotten: — '*Capulo eburneo candidissime, cruce aurea splendidissime*' &c. — *Turpini de Gestis Carol. Mag. cap. 22.* The name of Jesus was not unfrequently inscribed on the handle. The

Ghost. [*Beneath.*] Swear.

Ham. *Hic & ubique!* then we'll shift our ground: —
Come hither, gentlemen,
And lay your hands again upon my sword:
Swear by my sword,
Never to speak of this that you have heard.

Ghost. [*Beneath.*] Swear by his sword.

Ham. Well said, old mole! canst work i'the earth
so fast?

A worthy pioneer! — Once more remove, good friends.

Hor. O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!

Ham. And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.
There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

But come; — —

Here, as before, never, so help you mercy!

How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself,

As I, perchance, hereafter shall think meet

To put an antic disposition on, —

That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,

With arms encumber'd thus, or this head-shake,

Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,

As, *Well, well, we know*; — or, *We could, and if we
would*; — or, *If we list to speak*; — or, *There be, an
if they might*; —

Or such ambiguous giving out, to note

That you know aught of me: — This not to do,
swear²⁰;

So grace and mercy at your most need help you!

Ghost. [*Beneath.*] Swear.

allusions to this custom are very numerous in our old writers, and Warburton has noticed it in *Bartholinus De Causis Contempt. Mort.* apud Danos. Simon Maioli, in his very curious book *Dierum Canicularium*, mentions that the ancient Germans swore by the sword and death. Leonato, in *The Winter's Tale*, Act ii. Sc. 3, says: —

————— *Swear by this sword,*
Thou wilt perform my bidding.

²⁰ The quarto 1640 reads — 'this do swear.' The construction of this passage is rather embarrassed, but the sense is sufficiently obvious without explanation.

Ham. Rest, rest, perturbed spirit²¹! So, gentlemen,
With all my love I do commend me to you:
And what so poor a man as Hamlet is
May do, to express his love and friending to you,
God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together;
And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.
The time is out of joint;—O cursed spite!
That ever I was born to set it right!
Nay, come, let's go together. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I. *A Room in Polonius' House.*

Enter POLONIUS *and* REYNALDO.

Pol. Give him this money, and these notes, Reynaldo.

Rey. I will, my lord.

Pol. You shall do marvellous wisely, good Reynaldo,
Before you visit him, to make inquiry

²¹ 'Shakspeare has riveted our attention to the ghost by a succession of forcible circumstances: — by the previous report of the terrified sentinels, — by the solemnity of the hour at which the phantom walks, — by its martial stride and discriminating armour, visible only *per incertam lunam*, by the glimpses of the moon, — by its long taciturnity, by its preparation to speak, when interrupted by the morning cock, — by its mysterious reserve throughout its first scene with Hamlet, — by his resolute departure with it, and the subsequent anxiety of his attendants, — by its conducting him to a solitary angle of the platform, by its voice from beneath the earth, — and by its unexpected burst on us in the closet. Hamlet's late interview with the spectre must in particular be regarded as a stroke of dramatic artifice. The phantom might have told his story in the presence of the officers and Horatio, and yet have rendered itself as inaudible to them as it afterwards did to the queen. But suspense was the poet's object; and never was it more effectually created than in the present instance. Six times has the royal semblance appeared, but till now has been withheld from speaking. For this event we have waited with impatient curiosity, unaccompanied by lassitude, or remitted attention.' — *Steevens.*

Of his behaviour.

Rey. My lord, I did intend it.

Pol. Marry, well said: very well said. Look you, sir,

Inquire me first what Danskers¹ are in Paris;
And how, and who, what means, and where they keep,
What company, at what expense; and finding,
By this encompassment and drift of question,
That they do know my son, come you more nearer
Than your particular demands will touch it:
Take you, as 'twere, some distant knowledge of him;
As thus, — *I know his father, and his friends,*
And, in part, him; — Do you mark this, Reynaldo?

Rey. Ay, very well, my lord.

Pol. *And, in part, him;* — but, you may say, *not well:*

But, if't be he I mean, he's very wild;
Addicted so and so; — and there put on him
What forgeries you please; marry, none so rank
As may dishonour him; take heed of that;
But, sir, such wanton, wild, and usual slips,
As are companions noted and most known
To youth and liberty.

Rey. As gaming, my lord.

Pol. Ay, or drinking, fencing², swearing, quarrelling,

Drabbing: — You may go so far.

Rey. My lord, that would dishonour him.

Pol. 'Faith, no; as you may season it in the charge.
You must not put another scandal on him,
That he is open to incontinency;
That's not my meaning: but breathe his faults so quaintly,
That they may seem the taints of liberty;

¹ i. e. *Danes*. Warner, in his *Albion's England*, calls Denmark *Danske*.

² 'The cunning of *fencers* is now applied to *quarrelling*: they thinke themselves no men, if for stirring of a straw, they prove not their valure uppon some bodies fleshe.' — *Gossons Schole of Abuse*, 1579.

The flash and outbreak of a fiery mind;
A savageness³ in unreclaimed blood,
Of general assault.

Rey. But, my good lord, ——

Pol. Wherefore should you do this?

Rey. Ay, my lord,
I would know that.

Pol. Marry, sir, here's my drift;
And, I believe, it is a fetch of warrant:

You laying these slight sullies on my son,
As 'twere a thing a little soil'd i'the working,
Mark you,

Your party in converse, him you would sound,
Having ever seen, in the prenominate crimes,
The youth you breathe of, guilty, be assur'd,
He closes with you in this consequence;

Good sir, or so⁴; or *friend*, or *gentleman*, —
According to the phrase, or the addition,
Of man, and country.

Rey. Very good, my lord.

Pol. And then, sir, does he this, — He does —
What was I about to say? — By the mass, I was
about to say something: — Where did I leave?

Rey. At, closes in the consequence.

Pol. At, closes in the consequence, — *Ay, marry;*
He closes with you thus: — *I know the gentleman;*
I saw him yesterday, or t'other day,
Or then, or then; with such, or such; and, as you say,
There was he gaming; there o'ertook in his rouse;
There falling out at tennis: or, perchance,
I saw him enter such a house of sale
(Videlicet a brothel), or so forth. —

See you now;

Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth:
And thus do we of wisdom and of reach,

³ 'A wildness of untamed blood, such as youth is generally assailed by.'

⁴ So, for so forth, as in the last act: — 'Six French rapiers and poniards with their assigns, as girdle, hanger, and so.'

With windlances, and with assays of bias⁵,
By indirections find directions out;
So, by my former lecture and advice,
Shall you my son: You have me, have you not?

Rey. My lord, I have.

Pol. God be wi' you; fare you well.

Rey. Good my lord, — —

Pol. Observe his inclination in yourself⁶.

Rey. I shall, my lord.

Pol. And let him play his music.

Rey. Well, my lord.
[Exit.]

Enter OPHELIA.

Pol. Farewell! — How now, Ophelia? what's the matter?

Oph. O, my lord, my lord, I have been so af-frighted!

Pol. With what, in the name of heaven?

Oph. My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
Lord Hamlet, — with his doublet all unbrac'd;
No hat upon his head; his stockings foul'd,
Ungarter'd and down-gyved⁷ to his ancle;
Pale as his shirt; his knees knocking each other;
And with a look so piteous in purport,
As if he had been loosed out of hell,
To speak of horrors, — he comes before me.

Pol. Mad for thy love?

Oph. My lord, I do not know;
But, truly, I do fear it.

Pol. What said he?

Oph. He took me by the wrist, and held me hard;
Then goes he to the length of all his arm;

⁵ i. e. by tortuous devices and side essays. 'To assay, or rather essay, of the French word *essayer*, *tentare*,' says Baret.

⁶ i. e. in your own person, personally add your own observations of his conduct to these inquiries respecting him.

⁷ Hanging down like the loose cincture which confines the fetters or gyves round the ancles.

And, with his other hand thus o'er his brow,
 He falls to such perusal of my face,
 As he would draw it. Long stay'd he so;
 At last, — a little shaking of mine arm,
 And thrice his head thus waving up and down, —
 He rais'd a sigh so piteous and profound,
 As it did seem to shatter all his bulk⁸,
 And end his being: That done, he lets me go:
 And, with his head over his shoulder turn'd,
 He seem'd to find his way without his eyes;
 For out o'doors he went without their help,
 And, to the last, bended their light on me.

Pol. Come, go with me; I will go seek the king.
 This is the very ecstasy of love;
 Whose violent property foredoes⁹ itself,
 And leads the will to desperate undertakings,
 As oft as any passion under heaven,
 That does afflict our natures. I am sorry, —
 What, have you given him any hard words of late?

Oph. No, my good lord; but, as you did command,
 I did repel his letters, and denied
 His access to me.

Pol. That hath made him mad.
 I am sorry, that with better heed and judgment,
 I hat not quoted¹⁰ him: I fear'd, he did but trifle,
 And meant to wreck thee; but, beshrew my jealousy!

⁸ i. e. his *breast*. 'The *bulke* or *breast* of a man, Thorax, la poitrine.' — *Baret*. Thus in *King Richard III.* Act i. Sc. 4, Clarence says: —

'————— but still the envious flood
 Kept in my soul, and would not let it forth, —
 But smothered it within my *panting bulk*.'

Malone cites this and the following passage, and yet explains it all his *body*! —

'————— her heart
 Beating her *bulk*, that his hand shakes withal.'

Rape of Lucrece.

⁹ To *foredo* and to *undo* were synonymous. Thus in *Othello*: —
 'That either makes me or *fordoes* me quite.'

¹⁰ To quote is to *note*, to *mark*. Thus in *The Rape of Lucrece*: —
 'Yea, the illiterate

Will quote my loathed trespass in my looks.'

This word in the quarto is written *coted*, which was the old orthography of *quoted*.

It seems, it is as proper to our age
 To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions,
 As it is common for the younger sort
 To lack discretion¹¹. Come, go we to the king:
 This must be known; which, being kept close, might
 move
 More grief to hide, than hate to utter love¹².
 Come¹³. [Exeunt.

SCENE II. *A Room in the Castle.*

Enter King, Queen, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and Attendants.

King. Welcome, dear Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern!
 Moreover that we much did long to see you,
 The need, we have to use you, did provoke
 Our hasty sending. Something have you heard
 Of Hamlet's transformation; so I call it,
 Since not¹ the exterior nor the inward man
 Resembles that it was: What it should be,
 More than his father's death, that thus hath put him
 So much from the understanding of himself,
 I cannot dream² of: I entreat you both,
 That, — being of so young days brought up with him;
 And, since, so neighbour'd to his youth and humour³, —
 That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court

¹¹ This it not the remark of a weak man. It is always the fault of a little mind made artful by long commerce with the world. The quartos read, 'By heaven it is as proper,' &c.

¹² This must be made known to the king, for (being kept secret) the hiding Hamlet's love might occasion more mischief to us from him and the queen, than the uttering or revealing it will occasion hate and resentment from Hamlet.' Johnson, whose explanation this is, attributes the obscurity to the poet's 'affectation of concluding the scene with a couplet.' There would surely have been more affectation in deviating from the universally established custom.

¹³ Folio omits come.

¹ Quarto — *sith* nor.

² Folio — *deem*.

³ Quarto — *haviour*.

Some little time: so by your companies
To draw him on to pleasures; and to gather,
So much as from occasion you may glean,
Whether aught, to us unknown, afflicts him thus⁴,
That, open'd, lies within our remedy.

Queen. Good gentlemen, he hath much talk'd of
you;

And, sure I am, two men there are not living,
To whom he more adheres. If it will please you
To show us so much gentry⁵, and good will,
As to expend your time with us a while,
For the supply and profit⁶ of our hope,
Your visitation shall receive such thanks
As fits a king's remembrance.

Ros. Both your majesties
Might, by the sovereign power you have of us⁷,
Put your dread pleasures more into command
Than to entreaty.

Guil. But⁸ we both obey;
And here give up ourselves, in the full bent⁹,
To lay our service freely at your feet,
To be commanded.

King. Thanks, Rosencrantz, and gentle Guildenstern.

Queen. Thanks, Guildenstern, and gentle Rosencrantz;
And I beseech you instantly to visit
My too much changed son.—Go, some of you,
And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.

Guil. Heavens make our presence, and our prac-
tices,

⁴ This line is omitted in the folio.

⁵ *Gentry* for *gentle courtesy*. 'Gentlemanliness or *gentry*, kindness, or natural goodness. *Generositas*.' — *Baret*.

⁶ *Supply* and *profit* is *aid* and *advantage*.

⁷ i. e. *over* us.

⁸ Folio omits *but*.

⁹ There is no ground for the assertion that this metaphorical expression is derived from bending a bow. See *Much Ado About Nothing*, Act ii. Sc. 3. Hamlet in a future scene says:—

'They fool me to the very top of my *bent*.'

i. e. to the utmost of my inclination or disposition.

Pleasant and helpful to him!

Queen. Ay, Amen!

[*Exeunt Ros. GUIL. and some Attendants.*]

Enter POLONIUS.

Pol. The ambassadors from Norway, my good lord,
Are joyfully return'd.

King. Thou still hast been the father of good news.

Pol. Have I, my lord? Assure you, my good liege,
I hold my duty, as I hold my soul,
Both to my God, and to my gracious king;
And I do think, (or else this brain of mine
Hunts not the trail¹⁰ of policy so sure
As it hath¹¹ us'd to do,) that I have found
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

King. O, speak of that; that do I long to hear.

Pol. Give first admittance to the ambassadors;
My news shall be the fruit¹² to that great feast.

King. Thyself do grace to them, and bring them
in. [*Exit POLONIUS.*]

He tells me, my dear Gertrude, he hath found
The head and source of all your son's distemper.

Queen. I doubt, it is no other but the main;
His father's death, and our o'erhasty marriage.

Re-enter POLONIUS, with VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.

King. Well, we shall sift him. — Welcome, my good
friends!

Say, Voltimand, what from our brother Norway?

Vol. Most fair return of greetings, and desires.
Upon our first, he sent out to suppress
His nephew's levies; which to him appear'd
To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack;

¹⁰ i. e. the *trace* or *track*. Vestigium. It is that vestige, whether of footmarks or scent, which enables the hunter to follow the game.

¹¹ Folio — *as I have*.

¹² Folio — *news*. By fruit *dessert* is meant.

But, better look'd into, he truly found
 It was against your highness: Whereat griev'd, —
 That so his sickness, age, and impotence,
 Was falsely borne in hand¹³, — sends out arrests
 On Fortinbras; which he, in brief, obeys;
 Receives rebuke from Norway; and, in fine,
 Makes vow before his uncle, never more
 To give the assay¹⁴ of arms against your majesty.
 Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy,
 Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee¹⁵;
 And his commission, to employ those soldiers,
 So levied as before, against the Polack:
 With an entreaty, herein further shown,

[Gives a Paper.]

That it might please you to give quiet pass
 Through your dominions for this enterprise;
 On such regards of safety, and allowance,
 As therein are set down.

King.

It likes us well:

And, at our more consider'd time, we'll read,
 Answer, and think upon this business.

Mean time, we thank you for your well-took labour:
 Go to your rest; at night we'll feast together:
 Most welcome home!

[Exeunt VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS.]

Pol.

This business is well ended.

My liege, and madam, to expostulate¹⁶

13 i. e. deluded, imposed on, deceived by false appearances. It is used several times by Shakspeare, *Macbeth*, Act iii. Sc. 1.; *Much Ado about Nothing*, Act iv. Sc. 1.; *Cymbeline*, Sc. ult.

14 Malone refers to the custom of *taking the assay* of wine, &c. before it was drunk by princes and other great persons, to ascertain that it was not poisoned. But the expression in the text has nothing to do with that custom. To give the assay of arms is 'to attempt or essay any thing in arms, or by force. *Accingi armis.*' I have to request the reader's patience for this superfluous note, but it is really sometimes impossible to resist exposing such mistakes.

15 That is, the king gave his nephew a *feud* or *fee* in land of that annual value. The quartos read *three score thousand*, i. e. sixty thousand.

16 i. e. to inquire. 'Polonius is a man bred in courts, exercised in business, stored with observation, confident in his knowledge, proud of his eloquence, and declining into dotage. His mode of

What majesty should be, what duty is,
 Why day is day, night, night, and time is time,
 Were nothing but to waste night, day, and time.
 Therefore, — since brevity is the soul of wit,
 And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes, —
 I will be brief: Your noble son is mad:
 Mad call I it: for, to define true madness,
 What is't, but to be nothing else but mad:
 But let that go.

Queen. More matter, with less art.

Pol. Madam, I swear, I use no art at all.
 That he is mad, 'tis true: 'tis true, 'tis pity;
 And pity 'tis, 'tis true: a foolish figure;
 But farewell it, for I will use no art.
 Mad let us grant him then: and now remains,
 That we find out the cause of this effect;
 Or, rather say, the cause of this defect;
 For this effect, defective, comes by cause:
 Thus it remains, and the remainder thus.
 Perpend.
 I have a daughter; have, while she is mine;
 Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,
 Hath given me this: Now gather, and surmise.
 — *To the celestial, and my soul's idol, the most
 beautified*¹⁷ *Ophelia,* — —

oratory is designed to ridicule the practice of those times, of prefaces that made no introduction, and of method that embarrassed rather than explained. This part of his character is accidental, the rest natural. Such a man is positive and confident, because he knows that his mind was once strong, and knows not that it is become weak. Such a man excels in general principles, but fails in particular application. He is knowing in retrospect, and ignorant in foresight. While he depends upon his memory, and can draw from his repositories of knowledge, he utters weighty sentences, and gives useful counsel; but as the mind in its enfeebled state cannot be kept long busy and intent, the old man is subject to the dereliction of his faculties, he loses the order of his ideas, and entangles himself in his own thoughts, till he recover the leading principle, and fall into his former train. The idea of dotage encroaching upon wisdom, will solve alle the phenomena of the character of Polonius.' — *Johnson.*

¹⁷ Vile as Polonius esteems the phrase, from its equivocal meaning, Shakspeare has used it again in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*:

That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase; *beautified* is a vile phrase, but you shall hear. — Thus:

*In her excellent white bosom, these, &c.*¹⁸

Queen. Came this from Hamlet to her?

Pol. Good madam, stay awhile; I will be faithful. —
[Reads.

Doubt thou, the stars are fire;

Doubt, that the sun doth move:

Doubt truth to be a liar;

But never doubt, I love.

O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers; I have not art to reckon my groans; but that I love thee best. O most best, believe it. Adieu.

*Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst
this machine is to him, Hamlet.*

This, in obedience, hath my daughter shown me:
And more above, hath his solicitings,
As they fell out by time, by means, and place,
All given to mine ear

King. But how hath she
Receiv'd his love?

Pol. What do you think of me?

King. As of a man faithful and honourable.

Pol. I would fain prove so. But what might you
think,

When I had seen this hot love on the wing,
(As I perceiv'd it, I must tell you that,
Before my daughter told me,) what might you,
Or my dear majesty your queen here, think,
If I had play'd the desk, or table-book;

'—— Seeing you are *beautified*
With goodly shape,' &c.

Nash, in his dedication of Christ's 'Tears over Jerusalem, 1594:—
'To the most *beautified* Lady Elizabeth Cary.' It is not uncommon
in dedications and encomiastic verses of the poet's age.

18 See note on *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Act iii. Sc. 1.
Formerly the word *these* was usually added at the end of the
superscription of letters. The folio reads: — '*These* in her excel-
lent white bosom *these*.'

Or given my heart a winking, mute and dumb¹⁹;
 Or look'd upon this love with idle sight;
 What might you think? no, I went round²⁰ to work,
 And my young mistress thus did I bespeak;
*Lord Hamlet is a prince out of thy star*²¹;
This must not be: and then I precepts gave her,
 That she should lock herself from his resort,
 Admit no messengers, receive no tokens.
 Which done, she took the fruits of my advice;
 And he, repulsed, (a short tale to make,)
 Fell into a sadness; then into a fast;
 Thence to a watch; thence into a weakness;
 Thence to a lightness; and, by this declension,
 Into the madness wherein now he raves²²,
 And all we mourn for.

King. Do you think, 'tis this?

Queen. It may be, very likely.

Pol. Hath there been such a time, (I'd fain know that,)

19 'If I had play'd the *desk*, or *table-book*;

Or given my heart a *winking*, mute and dumb.'

That is 'If I had acted the part of *depository* of their secret loves, or given my heart a *hint* to be mute about their passion.' The quartos read — 'given my heart a *working*,' and the modern editors follow this reading: I prefer the reading of the folio. 'Conniventia, a *winking at*; a sufferance; a *feigning not to see or know*.' The pleonasm, *mute and dumb*, is found in the Rape of Lucrece: —

'And in my hearing be you *mute and dumb*.'

20 Plainly, roundly, without reserve. Polonius, in the third act, says, 'be *round* with him.'

21 This was changed to *sphere* in the 4to. 1632, and that reading is followed by the modern editions. 'Out of thy *star*,' is placed above thee by *destiny*. We have fortune's *star* in a former scene. Aumerle in King Richard III. says: —

'Shall I so much dishonour my fair *stars*.'

22 'The ridicule of this character is here admirably sustained. He would not only be thought to have discovered this intrigue by his own sagacity, but to have remarked all the stages of Hamlet's disorder, from his sadness to his raving, as regularly as his physician could have done; when all the while the madness was only feigned. The humour of this is exquisite from a man who tells us, with a confidence peculiar to small politicians, that he could find —

"Where truth was hid, though it were hid indeed
 Within the centre."

Warburton.

That I have positively said, 'Tis so,
When it prov'd otherwise?

King. Not that I know.

Pol. Take this from this, if this be otherwise:

[Pointing to his Head and Shoulder.]

If circumstances lead me, I will find
Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed
Within the centre.

King. How may we try it further?

Pol. You know, sometimes he walks four hours
together,
Here in the lobby.

Queen. So he does, indeed.

Pol. At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him:
Be you and I behind an arras then;
Mark the encounter: if he love her not,
And be not from his reason fallen thereon,
Let me be no assistant for a state,
But keep a farm, and carters.

King. We will try it.

Enter HAMLET, reading.

Queen. But, look, where sadly the poor wretch
comes reading.

Pol. Away, I do beseech you, both away;
I'll board²³ him presently: — O, give me leave. —

[Exeunt KING, QUEEN, and Attendants.]

How does my good Lord Hamlet?

Ham. Well, God-'a-mercy.

Pol. Do you know me, my lord?

Ham. Excellent well; you are a fishmonger.

Pol. Not I, my lord.

Ham. Then I would you were so honest a man.

Pol. Honest, my lord?

Ham. Ay, sir; to be honest, as this world goes, is
to be one man picked out of ten thousand.

Pol. That's very true, my lord.

²³ i. e. accost, address him. See Twelfth Night, Act i. Sc. 3.

Ham. For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a god, kissing carrion²⁴, — — Have you a daughter?

Pol. I have, my lord.

Ham. Let her not walk i'the sun: conception is a blessing; but as your daughter may conceive²⁵, — friend, look to't.

Pol. How say you by that? [*Aside.*] Still harping on my daughter: — yet he knew me not at first; he said, I was a fishmonger: He is far gone, far gone: and, truly in my youth I suffered much extremity for love; very near this. I'll speak to him again. — What do you read, my lord?

Ham. Words, words, words!

Pol. What is the matter, my lord?

Ham. Between who?

24 The old copies read — 'being a *good* kissing carrion.' The emendation is Warburton's, who has accompanied it with a long comment, in which he endeavours to prove that Shakspeare intended the passage as a vindication of the ways of Providence in permitting evil to abound in the world. He observes that Shakspeare 'had an art not only of acquainting the audience with what his actors *say*, but what they *think*.' This emendation, and the moral comment on it, delighted Dr. Johnson, who says 'that it almost sets the critic on a level with the author!' There was certainly much ingenuity in the emendation (which is unquestionably right) as well as in the argument, but the latter appears totally irrelevant and strained, and certainly was rather intended to show the skill and ingenuity of the critic than to raise the character of the poet, or display his *true* meaning. Warburton pointed out the same kind of expression in *Cymbeline*: — 'Common-kissing Titan.' And Malone has adduced the following passage from the play of *King Edward III.* 1596, which Shakspeare had certainly seen: —

'The freshest *summer's day* doth soonest taint
The loathed *carrion* that it seems to kiss.'

25 The folio reads — 'Conception is a blessing, but *not* as your daughter may conceive.' Steevens thinks that there is a play upon words here, as in the first scene of *King Lear*: —

'Kent. I cannot *conceive* you, sir.

'Glo. Sir, this young fellow's mother *could*.'

But the simple meaning may be, 'though conception in general be a blessing, yet as your daughter may chance to conceive that it may be a calamity, every thing being so corrupt or sinful in the world;' he therefore counsels Polonius not to let his daughter 'walk i'the sun,' i. e. be too much exposed to the corrupting influence of the world. The abrupt transitions and obscurities of Hamlet's language are intended to give Polonius a notion of his insanity.

Pol. I mean, the matter that you read, my lord?

Ham. Slanders, sir: for the satirical rogue²⁶ says here, that old men have gray beards: that their faces are wrinkled; their eyes purging thick amber, and plum-tree gum; and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams: All of which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down; for yourself, sir, should be as old as I am, if, like a crab, you could go backward.

Pol. Though this be madness, yet there's method in it. [*Aside.*] Will you walk out of the air, my lord?

Ham. Into my grave?

Pol. Indeed, that is out o'the air. — How pregnant sometimes his replies are! a happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be delivered of. I will leave him, and suddenly contrive the means of meeting between him and my daughter. — My honourable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you²⁷.

Ham. You cannot, sir, take from me any thing that I will more willingly part withal; except my life, except my life, except my life.

Pol. Fare you well, my lord.

Ham. These tedious old fools!

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Pol. You go to seek the Lord Hamlet; there he is.

Ros. God save you, sir!

[*To* POLONIUS.]

[*Exit* POLONIUS.]

²⁶ By 'the satirical rogue' Warburton will have it that Shakspeare means Juvenal, and refers to a passage on old age in his tenth satire. Dr. Farmer states that there was a translation of that satire by Sir John Beaumont, but is uncertain whether it was printed in Shakspeare's time. The defects of age were, however, a common topic of moral reflection.

²⁷ This speech is abridged thus in the quartos: —

'I will leave him and my daughter. My lord,
I will take my leave of you.'

Guil. My honour'd lord! —

Ros. My most dear lord! —

Ham. My excellent good friends! How dost thou, Guildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz! Good lads, how do ye both?

Ros. As the indifferent children of the earth.

Guil. Happy, in that we are not overhappy;
On fortune's cap we are not the very button.

Ham. Nor the soles of her shoe?

Ros. Neither, my lord.

Ham. Then you live about her waist, or in the middle of her favours?

Guil. 'Faith, her privates we.

Ham. In the secret parts of fortune? O, most true; she is a strumpet. What news?

Ros. None, my lord; but that the world is grown honest.

Ham. Then is doomsday near: But your news is not true²⁸. [Let me question more in particular: What have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of fortune, that she sends you to prison hither?

Guil. Prison, my lord?

Ham. Denmark's a prison!

Ros. Then is the world one.

Ham. A goodly one; in which there are many confines, wards, and dungeons; Denmark being one of the worst.

Ros. We think not so, my lord.

Ham. Why, then 'tis none to you; for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so: to me it is a prison.

Ros. Why, then your ambition makes it one: 'tis too narrow for your mind.

Ham. O God! I could be bounded in a nut-shell, and count myself a king of infinite space; were it not that I have bad dreams.

²⁸ All within crotchets is wanting in the quarto copies.

Guil. Which dreams, indeed, are ambition; for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream ²⁹.

Ham. A dream itself is but a shadow.

Ros. Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality, that it is but a shadow's shadow.

Ham. Then are our beggars, bodies; and our monarchs, and outstretch'd heroes, the beggar's shadows ³⁰: Shall we to the court? for, by my fay ³¹, I cannot reason.

Ros. Guil. We'll wait upon you.

Ham. No such matter: I will not sort you with the rest of my servants; for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended.] But, in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore ³²?

Ros. To visit you, my lord; no other occasion.

Ham. Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks; but I thank you; and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear, a halfpenny. Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, come; deal justly with me: come, come; nay, speak.

²⁹ Shakspeare has accidentally inverted the expression of Pindar, that the state of humanity is *σζιάς ὄναρ*, the dream of a shadow. Thus also Sir John Davies:—

Man's life is but a dreame, nay, less than so,
A shadow of a dreame.'

And Lord Sterline, in his *Darius*, 1603:—

'Whose best was but *the shadow of a dream*.'

These passages remind me of a beautiful thought in George Chapman's *Poem on the Death of Prince Henry*, which I have cited elsewhere:—

'O God, what doth not one short hour snatch up
Of all man's gloss? — Still overflows the cup
Of his burst cares; put with no nerves together,
And lighter than *the shadow of a feather*.'

³⁰ 'If ambition is such an unsubstantial thing, then are our beggars (who at least can dream of greatness) the only things of substance, and monarchs and heroes, though appearing to fill such mighty space with their ambition, but the shadows of the beggars' dreams.' Johnson thought that Shakspeare designed 'a ridicule of those declamations against wealth and greatness, that seem to make happiness consist in poverty.'

³¹ See note on the Induction to *Taming of a Shrew*, p. 330.

³² See note on *Love's Labour's Lost*, Act iv. Sc. 3.

Guil. What should we say, my lord?

Ham. Any thing — but to the purpose. You were sent for; and there is a kind of confession in your looks, which your modesties have not craft enough to colour: I know, the good king and queen have sent for you.

Ros. To what end, my lord?

Ham. That you must teach me. But let me conjure you by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and by what more dear a better proposer could charge you withal, be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for, or no?

Ros. What say you?

[To GUILDENSTERN.]

Ham. Nay, then I have an eye of you³³; [Aside] — if you love me, hold not off.

Guil. My lord, we were sent for.

Ham. I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the king and queen moult no feather. I have of late (but, wherefore, I know not,) lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises: and, indeed, it goes so heavily with my disposition, that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me to be a steril promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'er-hanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire³⁴, why, it appears no other thing to me, than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form, and moving, how express and admirable! in action, how like an angel! in apprehension, how like a god! the beauty of the

33 To have an eye of any one is to have an inkling of his purpose, or to be aware of what he is about. It is still a common phrase. The first quarto has: — 'Nay, then I see how the winds sets.'

34 'Look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patins of bright gold.'

Merchant of Venice.

world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not me, nor woman neither; though, by your smiling, you seem to say so.

Ros. My lord, there is no such stuff in my thoughts.

Ham. Why did you laugh then, when I said, *Man delights not me?*

Ros. To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what lenten³⁵ entertainment the players shall receive from you: we coted³⁶ them on the way; and hither are they coming, to offer you service.

Ham. He that plays the king, shall be welcome; his majesty shall have tribute of me: the adventurous knight shall use his foil, and target: the lover shall not sigh gratis; the humorous man shall end his part in peace: [the clown shall make those laugh, whose lungs are tickled o'the sere³⁷;] and the lady shall say her mind freely, or the blank verse shall halt for't. — What players are they?

Ros. Even those you were wont to take such delight in, the tragedians of the city.

Ham. How chances it, they travel³⁸? their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways.

35 Sparing; like the entertainments given in *Lent*.

36 To *cote* is to *pass alongside*, to *pass by*: —

‘—— Marry, presently *coted* and outstript them.’

Return from Parnassus.

‘With that Hippomenes *coted* her.’

Golding's Ovid, *Metam.* ii.

It was a familiar hunting term, and its origin from *à côté*, French, is obvious.

37 The first quarto reads: — ‘The clown shall make them laugh that are tickled in the lungs.’ The words as they now stand are in the folio. The meaning appears to be, the clown shall make even those laugh whose lungs are tickled with a dry cough, or huskiness; by his merriment shall convert even their coughing into laughter. The same expression occurs in Howard's *Defensative against the Poyson of supposed Prophecies*, 1620, folio: — Discovering the moods and humours of the vulgar sort to be so loose and *tickle of the seare*.’

38 In the first quarto copy this passage stands thus: —

‘*Ham.* How comes it that they travel? do they grow restie?’

‘*Gil.* No, my lord, their reputation holds as it was wont.’

‘*Ham.* How then?’

Ros. I think, their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation.

Ham. Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city? Are they so followed?

Ros. No, indeed, they are not.

Ham. How comes it? Do they grow rusty?

Ros. Nay, their endeavour keeps in the wonted pace: But there is, sir, an aiery³⁹ of children, little eyases⁴⁰, that cry out on the top of question⁴¹ and are most tyrannically clapped for't: these are now the fashion; and so berattle the common stages (so they call them), that many, wearing rapiers, are afraid of goose quills, and dare scarce come thither.

Ham. What, are they children? who maintains them? how are they escoted⁴²? Will they pursue the quality⁴³,

'Gil. I faith, my lord, *novelty* carries it away, for the principal publike audience that came to them, are turned to private plays, and to the humour of *children*.'

By this we may understand what Hamlet means in saying 'their inhibition comes of the late innovation,' i. e. their prevention or hinderance comes from the late innovation of *companies of juvenile performers*, as the children of the revels, the children of St. Pauls, &c. They have not relaxed in their endeavours to please, but this (brood) aiery of little children are now the fashion, and have so abused the common stages as to deter many from frequenting them. Thus in Jack Drum's Entertainment, or Pasquil and Catherine, 1601:—

'I sawe the children of Powles last night,
And troth they pleased me prettie prettie well,
The apes in time will do it handsomely.

Pla. I faith,
I like the audience that frequenteth there
With *much applause*; a man shall not be chokt
With the stench of garlick, nor be pasted
To the barmy jacket of a beer-brewer.

'Bra. 'Tis a good gentle audience, and I hope
The boys will come one day in great request.'

39 i. e. a brood.

40 i. e. young nestlings; properly young unfledged hawks.

41 *Question* is speech, conversation. The meaning may therefore be, they cry out on the top of their voice.

42 i. e. paid.

43 i. e. *profession*. Mr. Gifford has remarked that 'this word seems more peculiarly appropriated to the profession of a player by our old writers.' But in *Measure for Measure*, Angelo, when the *Bawd* and *Tapster* are brought before him, inquires what *quality* they are of. In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, the *Outlaws* speak of men of our *quality*. And Sir Thomas Eliot, in his *Pla-*

no longer than they can sing? will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players (as it is most like, if their means are no better,) their writers do them wrong, to make them exclaim against their own succession?

Ros. 'Faith, there has been much to do on both sides; and the nation holds it no sin, to tarre⁴⁴ them on to controversy: there was, for a while, no money bid for argument, unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question.

Ham. Is it possible?

Guil. O, there has been much throwing about of brains.

Ham. Do the boys carry it away?

Ros. Ay, that they do, my lord; Hercules and his load too⁴⁵.

Ham. It is not very strange: for my uncle is King of Denmark, and those, that would make mouths⁴⁶ at him while my father lived, give twenty, forty, fifty, a hundred ducats a-piece, for his picture in little. 'Sblood, there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out.

[*Flourish of Trumpets within.*

Guil. There are the players.

Ham. Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. Your hands. Come then: the appurtenance of wel-

tonic Dialogue, 1534: — 'According to the *profession* or *qualitee*, wherein men have opinion that wisdom doth rest, so ought to be the forme of livinge, countenance, and gesture.' He is speaking of *philosophers*.

'No longer than they can sing,' i. e. no longer than they keep the voices of boys, and sing in the choir.

44 i. e. set them on, a phrase borrowed from the setting on a dog. Thus in King John: —

'Like a dog that is compelled to fight,
Snatch at his master that doth tarre him on.'

45 i. e. carry all the world before them: there is perhaps an allusion to the *Globe* theatre, the sign of which is said to have been Hercules carrying the globe.

46 First copy, 'mops and moes.' Folio 'mowes.'

come is fashion and ceremony: let me comply⁴⁷ with you in this garb; lest my extent to the players, which, I tell you, must show fairly outward, should more appear like entertainment than yours. You are welcome: but my uncle-father, and aunt-mother, are deceived.

Guil. In what, my dear lord?

Ham. I am but mad north-north-west; when the wind is southerly, I know a hawk from a hand-saw⁴⁸.

Enter POLONIUS.

Pol. Well be with you, gentlemen!

Ham. Hark you, Guildenstern; — and you too; — at each ear a hearer: that great baby, you see there, is not yet out of his swaddling-clouts.

47 'Let me *comply* with you in this garb.' Hanmer, with his usual temerity, changed *comply* to *compliment*, and Steevens has contented himself with saying that he means 'to *compliment* with,' here and in a passage in the fifth act, 'He did *comply* with his dug before he sucked it,' where that sense would be even more absurd. He evidently never looked at the context. Hamlet has received his old schoolfellows with somewhat of the coldness of suspicion hitherto, but he now remembers that this is not courteous: He therefore rouses himself to give them a proper reception. 'Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore — *Your hands*. Come then, the appurtenance of welcome is *fashion* and *ceremony*: let me EMBRACE you in this *fashion*: lest I should seem to give you a less courteous reception than I give the players, to whom I must behave with at least exterior politeness.' That to *comply* with was to *embrace* will appear from the following passages in Herrick: —

'———— witty Ovid, by
Whom fair Corinna sits, and doth *comply*,
With iv'ry wrists, his laureat head, and steeps
His eye in dew of kisses, while he sleeps.'

Again: —

'———— a rug of carded wool
Which, sponge-like, drinking in the dull
Light of the moon, seem'd to *comply*,
Cloud-like, the dainty deity.'

Dr. Nott's Selections from Herrick, pp. 127 and 153.

48 The original form of this proverb was undoubtedly 'To know a hawk from a *hernshaw*,' that is, to know a hawk from the *heron* which it pursues. The corruption is said to be as old as the time of Shakspeare.

Ros. Happily, he's the second time come to them; for, they say, an old man is twice a child.

Ham. I will prophesy, he comes to tell me of the players; mark it. — You say right, sir: o'Monday morning; 'twas then, indeed.

Pol. My lord, I have news to tell you.

Ham. My lord, I have news to tell you. When Roscius was an actor in Rome, — —

Pol. The actors are come hither, my lord.

Ham. Buz, buz⁴⁹!

Pol. Upon my honour, — —

Ham. *Then came each actor on his ass*, — —

Pol. The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, [tragical-historical, tragical-comical, historical-pastoral,]⁵⁰ scene individable, or poem unlimited: — Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light. For the law of writ⁵¹, and the liberty, these are the only men.

Ham. *O Jephthah, judge of Israel*, — what a treasure hadst thou!

Pol. What a treasure had he, my lord?

Ham. Why — *One fair daughter, and no more,
The which he loved passing well*⁵².

49 Surely the commentators need not have expended their ingenuity on this common interjection.

50 The words within crotchets are not in the quartos.

51 *Writ* for *writing*, a common abbreviation, which is not yet obsolete: we still say holy *writ*, for the sacred writings. I should not have noticed this, but that there have been editors who thought that we should read, 'the law of *wit*.' The quarto of 1603 reads, 'for the law *hath* writ.' The modern editions have pointed this passage in the following manner: — 'Scene individable, or poem unlimited; Seneca cannot be too heavy nor Plautus too light. For the law of writ, and the liberty, these are the only men.' I have adhered to the pointing of the quarto, because it appears to me that the *law* and the *liberty* of *writing* relates to Seneca and Plautus, and not to the players.

52 An imperfect copy of this ballad, of 'Jephtha, Judge of Israel,' was given to Dr. Percy by Steevens. See *Reliques*, ed. 1794, vol. i. p. 189. There is a more correct copy in Mr. Evans's *Old Ballads*, vol. i. p. 7, ed. 1810.

Pol. Still on my daughter. [*Aside.*

Ham. Am I not i'the right, old Jephthah?

Pol. If you call me Jephthah, my lord, I have a daughter, that I love passing well.

Ham. Nay, that follows not.

Pol. What follows then, my lord?

Ham. Why, *As by lot, God wot*, and then, you know, *It came to pass, As most like it was*, — The first row of the pious chanson⁵³ will show you more; for look, my abridgment⁵⁴ comes.

Enter Four or Five Players.

Your are welcome, masters; welcome, all: I am glad to see thee well: — welcome, good friends. — O, old friend! Why, thy face is valanced⁵⁵ since I saw thee last; Coms't thou to beard me in Denmark? — What! my young lady and mistress! By-'r-lady, your ladyship is nearer to heaven, than when I saw you last, by the altitude of a chopine⁵⁶. 'Pray God, your

⁵³ *Pons chanson* is the reading of the first folio; three of the quartos read *pious*; and the newly discovered quarto of 1603, '*the godly ballad*,' which puts an end to controversy upon the subject. The *first row* is the first column. Every one is acquainted with the form of these old carols and ballads.

⁵⁴ The folio reads, '*abridgments cume*.' My *abridgment*, i. e. who come to abridge my talk.

⁵⁵ i. e. fringed with a beard.

⁵⁶ A *chopine*, a kind of high shoe, or rather clog, worn by the Spanish and Italian ladies, and adopted at one time as a fashion by the English. Coriate describes those worn by the Venetians as some of them 'half a yard high.' Bulwer, in his *Artificial Changeling*, complains of this fashion, as a monstrous affectation, 'wherein our ladies imitate the Venetian and Persian ladies.' That the fashion was originally of oriental origin seems very probable: there is a figure of a Turkish lady with *chopines* in Sandy's *Travels*; and another of a Venetian courtesan in the *Habiti Antichi*, &c. di Cesare Vecellio.

Chapin is the Spanish name; and Cobarruvias countenances honest Tom Coriate's account of the preposterous height to which some ladies carried them. He tells an old tale of their being invented to prevent women's gadding, being first made of *wood*, and very heavy; and that the ingenuity of the women overcame this inconvenience by substituting *cork*. Though they are mentioned under the name of *cioppini* by those who saw them in use in Venice, the dictionaries record them under the title of *zoccoli*.

voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not cracked within the ring⁵⁷. — Masters, you are all welcome. We'll e'en to't like French falconers, fly at any thing we see: We'll have a speech straight: Come, give us a taste of your quality; come, a passionate speech.

1 *Play*. What speech, my lord?

Ham. I heard thee speak me a speech once, — but it was never acted; or, if it was, not above once: for the play, I remember, pleased not the million⁵⁸; 'twas caviare to the general⁵⁹: but it was (as I received it, and others, whose judgments, in such matters, cried in the top of mine,) an excellent play: well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning. I remember, one said, there were no sallets in the lines⁶⁰, to make the matter savoury: nor no matter in the phrase, that might indite the author of affection⁶¹; but called it, an honest method, as wholesome

Cobbaravias asserts that they were made of *xapino* (deal) in Italy, and not of cork; and hence their name. But the Spanish doctors differ about the etymology. Perhaps Hamlet may have some allusion to the *boy* having grown so as to fill the place of a tragedy heroine, and so assumed the *cothurnus*; which Puttenham described as 'high corked shoes, or pantofles, which now they call in Spaine and Italy *shoppini*.'

57 The old gold coin was thin and liable to crack. There was a *ring* or circle on it, within which the sovereign's head, &c. was placed; if the crack extended beyond this ring, it was rendered uncurrent: it was therefore a simile applied to any other debased or injured object. There is some humour in applying it to a *cracked voice*.

58 The quarto of 1603 *vulgar*.

59 "'Twas *caviare* to the *general*.' *Caviare* is said to be the pickled rocs of certain fish of the sturgeon kind, called in Italy *caviale*, and much used there and in other Catholic countries. Great quantities were prepared on the river Volga formerly. As a dish of high seasoning and peculiar flavour it was not relished by the *many*, i. e. the *general*. A fantastic fellow, described in Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels*, is said to be learning to eat macaroni, periwinkles, French beans, and *caviare*, and pretending to like them.

60 'There were no *sallets* in the lines.' The force of this phrase will appear from the following passage, cited by Steevens, from *A Banquet of Jests*, 1665: — 'For *junkets* joci, and for *sallets* sales.' 'Sal. *Salte*, a pleasante and mery word, that maketh folke to laugh, and sometimes pricketh.' — *Baret*.

61 i. e. impeach the author with *affectation* in his style. In *Love's Labour's Lost*, Nathaniel tells the Pedant that his reasons

as sweet, and by very much more handsome than fine. One speech in it I chiefly loved: 'twas Aeneas' tale to Dido; and thereabout of it especially, where he speaks of Priam's slaughter: If it live in your memory, begin at this line; let me see, let me see; —

The rugged Pyrrhus, like the Hyrcanian beast. —
'tis not so; it begins with Pyrrhus.

*The rugged Pyrrhus, — he, whose sable arms,
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble,
When he lay couched in the ominous horse,
Hath now his dread and black complexion smear'd
With heraldry more dismal; head to foot
Now he is total gules; horridly trick'd⁶²
With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons;
Bak'd and impasted with the parching streets,
That lend a tyrannous and a damned light
To their lord's murder: Roasted in wrath, and fire,
And thus o'er-sized with coagulate gore,
With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus
Old grandsire Priam seeks; — So proceed you.*

have been 'witty without affection.' In the Preface to George Chapman's *Banquet of Sence*, 1595, 'obscuritie in affection of words and indigested conceits is pedanticall and childish.' The folio indeed reads *affectation*. The poet has probably put into the mouth of Hamlet his own genuine opinion of this speech, and the play from whence it was derived; whether it was one of his own juvenile performances, or one of those inform dramas which he had polished, it is now vain to inquire. There are words and passages which were evidently coined in his mint.

Schlegel considers it as one example of the many niceties of Shakspeare which have never been understood. He observes, that 'this speech must not be judged by itself, but in connexion with the place where it is introduced. To distinguish it as dramatic poetry in the play itself, it was necessary that it should rise above the dignified poetry of that in the same proportion that the theatrical elevation does above simple nature. Hence Shakspeare has composed the play in Hamlet altogether in sententious rhymes, full of antithesis. But this solemn and measured tone did not suit a speech in which violent emotion ought to prevail; and the poet had no other expedient than the one of which he made use, overcharging the pathos.'

62 *Gules*, i. e. *red*, in the language of heraldry: to *trick* is to colour.

'With man's blood *paint* the ground; *gules*, *gules*.'

Timon of Athens.

Pol. 'Fore God, my lord, well spoken; with good accent, and good discretion.

1 *Play.* *Anon he finds him*
Striking too short at Greeks; his antique sword,
Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,
Repugnant to command: Unequal match'd,
Pyrrhus at Priam drives; in rage, strikes wide;
But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword
The unnerved father falls. Then senseless Ilium,
Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top
Stoops to his base; and with a hideous crash
Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear: for, lo! his sword
Which was declining on the milky head
Of reverend Priam, seem'd i' the air to stick:
So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood;
And, like a neutral to his will and matter,
Did nothing.

But, as we often see, against some storm,
A silence in the heavens, the rack⁶³ stand still,
The bold winds speechless⁶⁴, and the orb below
As hush as death: anon the dreadful thunder
Doth rend the region; So, after Pyrrhus' pause,
A roused vengeance sets him new a work;
And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall
On Mars's armour, forg'd for proof eterne,
With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword
Now falls on Priam. —
Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune! All you gods,
In general synod, take away her power;
Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel,
And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven,
As low as to the fiends!

Pol. This is too long.

Ham. It shall to the barber's, with your beard. —

63 The *rack* is the *clouds*, formed by vaporous exhalation. Johnson has chosen this passage and one in Dryden of the same import to exemplify the word which he explains, 'the clouds as they are driven by the winds.'

64 'Even as the wind is hush'd before it raineth.'

Venus and Adonis.

'Pr'ythee, say on; — He's for a jig⁶⁵, or a tale of bawdry, or he sleeps: — say on: come to Hecuba.

1 Play. *But who, ah woe! had seen the mobled⁶⁶ queen —*

Ham. The mobled queen?

Pol. That's good; mobled queen is good.

1 Play. *Run barefoot up and down, threat'ning the flames*

*With bisson⁶⁷ rheum; a clout upon that head,
Where late the diadem stood; and, for a robe,
About her lank and all o'er-teemed loins,
A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up;
Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steep'd,
'Gainst fortune's state would treason have pro-
nounc'd:*

*But if the gods themselves did see her then,
When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport
In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs;
The instant burst of clamour that she made,
(Unless things mortal move them not at all,)
Would have made milch⁶⁸ the burning eye of heaven,*

65 'He's for a jig or a tale of bawdry.' *Giga*, in Italian, was a fiddle, or crowd; *gigaro*, a fiddler, or minstrel. Hence a *jig* (first written *gigge*, though pronounced with *g* soft, after the Italian), was a ballad, or ditty, sung to the fiddle. 'Frottola, a countrie *gigge*, or round, or country song or wanton verse.' As these itinerant minstrels proceeded, they made it a kind of farcical dialogue; and at length it came to signify a short merry interlude: — 'Farce, the *jigg* at the end of an enterlude, wherein some pretie knaverie is acted.' There are several of the old ballads and dialogues called *Jigs* in the Harleian Collection. Thus also in *The Fatal Contract*, by Hemings: —

'———— we'll hear your *jigg*,
How is your *ballad* titled.'

66 The folio reads *inobled*, an evident error of the press; for *mobled*, which means *muffled*. The queen is represented with 'a clout upon her head and a blanket wrapt round her, caught up in the alarm of fear.' We have the word in *Ogilby's Fables*: —

'*Mobbled* nine days in my considering cap.'

And in *Shirly's Gentleman of Venice*: —

'The moon doth *mobble* up herself.'

67 *Bisson* is *blind*; *biren*, A. S. *Bissom rheum* is therefore *blinding tears*. In *Coriolanus* we have, '*Bisson* conspecuities.'

68 'Would have made *milch* the burning eye of heaven.' By a hardy poetical licence this expression means, 'Would have *filled*

And passion in the gods.

Pol. Look, whether he has not turn'd his colour, and has tears in's eyes⁶⁹. — 'Pr'ythee, no more.

Ham. 'Tis well; I'll have thee speak out the rest of this soon. — Good my lord, will you see the players well bestowed? Do you hear, let them be well used; for they are the abstract, and brief chronicles, of the time: After your death you were better have a bad epitaph, than their ill report while you live.

Pol. My lord, I will use them according to their desért.

Ham. Odd's bodikin, man, much better: Use every man after his desért, and who shall 'scape whipping? Use them after your own honour and dignity: The less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty. Take them in.

Pol. Come, sirs.

[Exit POLONIUS, with some of the Players.]

Ham. Follow him, friends: we'll hear a play to-morrow. — Dost thou hear me, old friend; can you play the murder of Gonzago?

1 Play. Ay, my lord.

Ham. We'll have it to-morrow night. You could,

with tears the burning eye of heaven. We have 'Lemosus, milch-hearted,' in Huloet's and in Lyttleton's Dictionaries, and Eliot renders *lemosi* 'those that weep lightly.' It is remarkable that, in old Italian, *lattuoso* is used for *luttuoso*, in the same metaphorical manner. To have 'made *passion* in the Gods' would have been to move them to *sympaihy* or *compassion*.

⁶⁹ 'The plays of Shakspeare, by their own power, must have given a different turn to acting, and almost new created the performers of his age. Mysteries, moralities, and interludes afforded no materials for art to work on, no discriminations of character, or varieties of appropriated language. From tragedies like *Cambyses*, *Tamburlaine*, and *Jeronymo*, nature was wholly banished; and the comedies of *Gammer Gurton*, *Comon Dondycyons*, and *The Old Wives Tale*, might have had justice done to them by the lowest order of human beings.

'Sanctius his animal, mentisque capacius altae, was wanting when the dramas of Shakspeare made their first appearance; and to these we were certainly indebted for the excellent actors who could never have improved so long as their sensibilities were unawakened, their memories burthened only by pedantic or puritanical declamation, and their manners vulgarised by pleasantries of as low an origin.' — *Steevens*.

for a need, study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines, which I would set down, and insert in't? could you not?

1 *Play.* Ay, my lord.

Ham. Very well. — Follow that lord; and look you mock him not. [*Exit Player.*] My good friends [*To Ros. and GUIL.*] I'll leave you till night: you are welcome to Elsinore.

Ros. Good my lord!

[*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.*]

Ham. Ay, so, God be wi' you: — Now I am alone. O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I! Is it not monstrous, that this player here, But in a fiction, in a dream of passion, Could force his soul so to his own conceit, That from her working, all his visage wann'd⁷⁰; Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect, A broken voice, and his whole function suiting With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing! For Hecuba!

What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba, That he should weep for her? What would he do, Had he the motive and the cue⁷¹ for passion, That I have? He would drown the stage with tears, And cleave the general ear with horrid speech; Make mad the guilty, and appal the free, Confound the ignorant, and amaze, indeed, The very faculties of eyes and ears.

⁷⁰ The folio reads *warm'd*, which reading Steevens contended for: he was probably moved by a spirit of opposition, for surely no one can doubt, who considers the context, that *wann'd* is the poet's word. Indeed I question whether *his visage warm'd*, for *his face suffused*, would have entered into the mind of a writer, or the comprehension of a reader or auditor in Shakspeare's time.

⁷¹ i. e. the *hint* or *prompt word*, a technical phrase among players; it is the word or sign given by the prompter for a player to enter on his *part*, to begin to speak or act. 'A prompter (says Florio), one who keepes the booke for the plaiers, and teacheth them, or schollers their *kue*,' i. e. their *part*; and this will explain why it is used in other places, as in *Othello*, for *part*: —

'Were it my *cue* to fight, I should have known it
Without a *prompter*.'

Yet I,
 A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,
 Like John a-dreams⁷², unpregnant of my cause,
 And can say nothing; no, not for a king,
 Upon whose property, and most dear life,
 A damn'd defeat⁷³ was made. Am I a coward?
 Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?
 Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face?
 Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i'the throat,
 As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this?
 Ha!

Why, I should take it: for it cannot be,
 But I am pigeon-liver'd, and lack gall
 To make oppression bitter; or, ere this,
 I should have fatted all the region kites
 With this slave's offal: Bloody, bawdy villain!
 Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless⁷⁴ villain!
 Why, what an ass am I? This is most brave;
 That I, the son of a dear father murder'd⁷⁵,
 Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
 Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,
 And fall a cursing, like a very drab,
 A scullion!
 Fye upon't! foh! About my brains⁷⁶! Humph! I have
 heard,

⁷² *John a dreams*, or *John a droynes*, was a common term for any dreaming or droning simpleton. There is a story told of one *John a droynes*, a Suffolk simpleton, who played the Devil in a stage play, in the Hundred Merry Tales. And there is another foolish character of that name in Whetstone's Promos and Cassandra. *Unpregnant* is not quickened or properly impressed with.

⁷³ *Defeat* here signifies *destruction*. It was frequently used in the sense of *undo* or *take away* by our old writers. Thus Chapman in his *Revenge for Honour*: —

'That he might meantime make a sure defeat
 On our good aged father's life.'

⁷⁴ *Kindless* is unnatural.

⁷⁵ The first folio reads thus: —

'Oh vengeance!

Who? What an ass am I? I sure this is most brave,
 That I the sonne of the *Deere* murdered.'

The quarto of 1604 omits 'Oh vengeance,' and reads, '*a deere murdered.*' The quarto of 1603, 'that I the son of my dear father.'

⁷⁶ It seems extraordinary that Mason and Steevens could ever conceive that there was any allusion here to the nautical phrase,

That guilty creatures, sitting at a play⁷⁷,
 Have, by the very cunning of the scene,
 Been struck so to the soul, that presently
 They have proclaim'd their malefactions!
 For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
 With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players
 Play something like the murder of my father,
 Before mine uncle; I'll observe his looks;
 I'll tent him⁷⁸ to the quick; if he do blench⁷⁹,
 I know my course. The spirit, that I have seen,
 May be a devil: and the devil hath power
 To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and, perhaps,
 Out of my weakness, and my melancholy,
 (As he is very potent with such spirits,)
 Abuses me to damn me: I'll have grounds
 More relative⁸⁰ than this: The play's the thing,
 Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.

[Exit.]

about ship 'About my brains' is nothing more than 'to work my brains.' The common phrase, to go *about* a thing, is not yet obsolete. Falstaff humours the equivocal use of the word in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*: — 'No quips now, Pistol; indeed I am in the waist too yards about; but I am now *about* no waste; I am *about* thrift.' Steevens's quotation from Heywood's *Iron Age* should have taught him better: —

'My brain *about* again! for thou hast found
 New projects now to work on.'

⁷⁷ A number of instances of the kind are collected by Thomas Heywood in his *Apology for Actors*.

⁷⁸ To *tent* was to *probe*, to search a wound.

⁷⁹ To *blench* is to shrink or start. Vide *Winter's Tale*, Act i. Sc. 2, p. 22.

⁸⁰ i. e. more *near*, more immediately connected. The first quarto reads, 'I will have sounder proofs.'

ACT III.

SCENE I. *A Room in the Castle.*

Enter King, Queen, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ,
and GUILDENSTERN.

King. And can you, by no drift of conference ¹
Get from him why he puts on this confusion;
Grating so harshly all his days of quiet
With turbulent and dangerous lunacy?

Ros. He does confess, he feels himself distracted;
But from what cause he will by no means speak.

Guil. Nor do we find him forward to be sounded;
But, with a crafty madness, keeps aloof,
When we would bring him on to some confession
Of his true state.

Queen. Did he receive you well?

Ros. Most like a gentleman.

Guil. But with much forcing of his disposition.

Ros. Niggard of question; but, of our demands,
Most free in his reply ².

Queen. Did you assay him
To any pastime?

Ros. Madam, it so fell out, that certain players
We o'er-raught ³ on the way: of these we told him;
And there did seem in him a kind of joy
To hear of it: They are about the court;
And, as I think, they have already order
This night to play before him.

Pol. 'Tis most true:
And he beseech'd me to entreat your majesties,
To hear and see the matter.

¹ Folio — circumstance.

² 'Slow to begin conversation, but free enough in answering our demands.'

³ i. e. reached, overtook.

King. With all my heart; and it doth much content me

To hear him so inclin'd.

Good gentlemen, give him a further edge,
And drive his purpose on to these delights.

Ros. We shall, my lord.

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.]

King. Sweet Gertrude, leave us too:

For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither;

That he, as 'twere by accident, may here

Affront⁴ Ophelia:

Her father, and myself (lawful espials⁵),

Will so bestow ourselves, that, seeing, unseen,

We may of their encounter frankly judge;

And gather by him, as he is behav'd,

If't be the affliction of his love, or no,

That thus he suffers for.

Queen. I shall obey you!

And, for your part, Ophelia, I do wish,

That your good beauties be the happy cause

Of Hamlet's wildness: so shall I hope, your virtues

Will bring him to his wonted way again,

To both your honours.

Oph. Madam, I wish it may.

[*Exit* Queen.]

Pol. Ophelia, walk you here: — Gracious, so please you:

We will bestow⁶ ourselves: — Read on this book;

[*To* OPHELIA.]

That show of such an exercise may colour

4 i. e. meet her, encounter her; *affrontare*; Ital.

5 [Lawful *espials*;] that is, lawful spies. An *espiall* in warres, a scoutwatche, a beholder, a viewer.' — *Baret*. See King Henry VI. Part i. Act i. Sc. 4. p. 24. An *espy* was also in use for a spy. The two words are only found in the folio.

6 [*Bestow* onrselves] is here used for *hide* or *place* ourselves. We have the word in the same sense in a subsequent scene: —

'Where the dead body is *bestow'd*, my lord,

We cannot get from him.'

We now use *stow*. One of our old dictionaries makes a discrimination between the acceptations of this word, thus: — 'To *bestow*, or *lay out*; to *bestow*, or *give*; to *bestow*, or *place*.'

Your loneliness⁷. — We are oft to blame in this, —
'Tis too much prov'd, — that, with devotion's visage,
And pious action, we do sugar o'er
The devil himself.

King. O, 'tis too true! how smart
A lash that speech doth give my conscience!
The harlot's cheek, beautied with plast'ring art,
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it,
Than is my deed to my most painted word:
O heavy burden! [Aside.

Pol. I hear him coming; let's withdraw, my lord.

[Exeunt King and POLONIUS.

Enter HAMLET.

Ham. To be, or not to be, that is the question: —
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind, to suffer —
The stings and arrows of outrageous fortune;
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And, by opposing, end them? — To die, — to sleep, —
No more; — and, by a sleep, to say we end
The heart-ach, and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to, — 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die; — to sleep; —
To sleep! perchance to dream; — ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil⁸,
Must give us pause: There's the respect⁹,
That makes calamity of so long life:
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time¹⁰,

⁷ Quarto — lowliness.

⁸ [This mortal coil;] that is, 'the tumult and bustle of this life. It is remarkable that under *garbuglio*, which has the same meaning in Italian as our *coil*, Florio has 'a pecke of troubles;' of which Shakspeare's 'sea of troubles' is only an aggrandized idea.

⁹ i. e. the *consideration*. This is Shakspeare's most usual sense of the word.

¹⁰ *Time*, for *the time*, is a very usual expression with our old writers. Thus in Ben Jonson's *Every Man Out of his Humour*:

'Oh, how I hate the monstrosousness of *time*.'

In *Cardanus Comfort*, by Thomas Bedingfield, 1569, is a description of the miseries of life strongly resembling that in the text: —

The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely ¹¹,
 The pangs of despis'd love, the law's delay,
 The insolence of office, and the spurns
 That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
 When he himself might his quietus ¹² make
 With a bare bodkin ¹³? who would fardels ¹⁴ bear,
 To grunt ¹⁵ and sweat under a weary life;
 But that the dread of something after death, —
 The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn ¹⁶
 No traveller returns, — puzzles the will;

'Hunger, thirst, sleape not plentiful or quiet as deade men have, heate in somer, colde in winter, *disorder of tyme*, terroure of warres, controlment of parents, cares of wedlocke, studye for children, slouth of servaunts, *contention of sutes*, and that which is most of all, *the condycyon of tyme* wherein *honestye is disdayned* as folye, and crafte is honoured as wisdome.'

11 Folio — 'the poor man's contumely.'

12 The allusion is to the term *quietus est*, used in settling accounts at exchequer audits. Thus Webster in his *Dutchess of Malfy*: —

'You had the trick in audit time to be sick,
 Till I had sign'd your *quietus*.'

And, more appositely, in Sir Thomas Overbury's character of a *Franklin*: — 'Lastly to *end* him, he cares not when his end comes; he needs not feare his audit, for his *quietus* is in heaven.'

13 '*Bodkin* was the ancient term for a small dagger.' Vide note on Act iii. Sc. 2, p. 91.

14 Packs, burdens.

15 Though *to grunt* has been degraded in modern language, it appears to have conveyed no vulgar or low image to the ear of our ancestors, as many quotations from the old translations of the classics would show. 'Loke that the places about thee be so in silence that thy corage and mynde *gronte* nor groudge nat.' *Paynel's Translation of Erasmus de Contempt. Mundi*. The fact seems to be, that *to groan* and *to grunt* were convertible terms. 'Swyne wode for love *groyneth*.' — *Horman's Vulgaria*. And Chaucer in *The Monk's Tale*: —

'But never *gront* he at no stroke but on.'

16 Mr. Douce points out the following passages in Cranmer's Bible, which may have been in Shakspeare's mind: — 'Afore I goe thither, from whence I shall not turne againe, even to the lande of darkness, and shadowe of death; yea into that darke cloudie lande and deadly shadow whereas is no order, but terrible feare as in the darknesse.' — *Job*, c. x. 'The way that I must goe is at hande, but whence I shall not turne againe.' — *Ib.* c. xvi.

————— Weep not for Mortimer,
 That scorns the world, and as a traveller
 Goes to discover countries yet unknown.'

Marlowe's *King Edward II.*

And makes us rather bear those ills we have,
 Than fly to others that we know not of?
 Thus conscience does make cowards of us all¹⁷;
 And thus the native hue of resolution
 Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought;
 And enterprizes of great pith¹⁸ and moment,
 With this regard, their currents turn awry¹⁹,
 And lose the name of action. — Soft you, now!
 The fair Ophelia: — Nymph, in thy orisons²⁰
 Be all my sins remember'd.

Oph. Good my lord,
 How does your honour for this many a day?

Ham. I humbly thank you; well.

Oph. My lord, I have remembrances of yours,
 That I have longed long to re-deliver;
 I pray you, now receive them.

Ham. No, not I;
 I never gave you aught.

Oph. My honour'd lord, you know right well, you did:
 And, with them, words of so sweet breath compos'd
 As made the things more rich: their perfume lost,
 Take these again; for to the noble mind,
 Rich gifts wax poor, when givers prove unkind.
 There, my lord.

Ham. Ha, ha! are you honest?

Oph. My lord?

Ham. Are you fair?

Oph. What means your lordship?

Ham. That if you be honest, and fair, your honesty
 should admit no discourse to your beauty²¹.

¹⁷ 'I'll not meddle with it, — it makes a man a coward.' — *King Richard III.* Act. i. Sc. 4. And again: —

'O coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me.'

Ib. Act. v. Sc. 3.

¹⁸ Quartos — *pitch*.

¹⁹ Folio — *away*.

²⁰ 'This is a touch of nature. Hamlet, at the sight of Ophelia, does not immediately recollect that he is to personate madness, but makes an address grave and solemn, such as the foregoing meditation excited in his thoughts.' — *Johnson*.

²¹ i. e. 'your honesty should not admit your beauty to any discourse with her.' The first quarto reads: — 'Your beauty should

Oph. Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than with honesty?

Ham. Ay, truly; for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd, than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness; this was some time a paradox, but now the time gives it proof. I did love you once.

Oph. Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

Ham. You should not have believed me; for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock, but we shall relish of it: I loved you not.

Oph. I was the more deceived.

Ham. Get thee to a nunnery; Why would'st thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest; but yet I could accuse me of such things, that it were better, my mother had not borne me: I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious; with more offences at my beck, than I have thoughts to put them in²², imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in; What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven! We are arrant knaves, all; believe none of us: Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's your father?

Oph. At home, my lord.

Ham. Let the doors be shut upon him; that he may play the fool no where²³ but in's own house. Farewell.

Oph. O, help him, you sweet heavens!

Ham. If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry; Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery; farewell²⁴: Or, if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool; for wise men know well enough, what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go; and quickly too. Farewell.

Oph. Heavenly powers, restore him!

admit no discourse to your honesty.' That of 1604: — 'You should admit no discourse to your beauty.'

22 [Than I have thoughts to put them in.] To put 'a thing into thought' is 'to think on it.'

23 Folio — way.

24 Folio — Go, farewell.

Ham. I have heard of your paintings²⁵ too, well enough; God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another: you jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nick-name God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance²⁶; Go to; I'll no more of it: it hath made me mad. I say, we will have no more marriages: those that are married already, all but one, shall live; the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go. [Exit HAMLET.]

Oph. O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword:
The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion, and the mould of form²⁷,
The observ'd of all observers! quite, quite down!
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,
That suck'd the honey of his music vows,
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune²⁸ and harsh;
That unmatch'd form and feature of blown youth,
Blasted with ecstasy²⁹: O, woe is me!
To have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

Re-enter King and POLONIUS.

King. Love! his affections do not that way tend:
Nor what he spake, though it lack'd form a little,
Was not like madness. There's something in his soul,
O'er which his melancholy sits on brood;
And, I do doubt, the hatch, and the disclose³⁰,

²⁵ The folio, for *paintings*, has *prattlings*; and for *face* has *pace*.

²⁶ 'You mistake by *wanton* affectation, and pretend to mistake by *ignorance*.'

²⁷ '*Speculum consuetudinis*.' — *Cicero*. The model by whom all endeavoured to form themselves.

²⁸ Quarto — *time*.

²⁹ *Ecstasy* is alienation of mind. Vide the *Tempest*, Act iii. Sc. 3.

³⁰ To *disclose* was the ancient term for *hatching* birds of any kind; from the Fr. *esclos*, and that from the Lat. *exclusus*. I believe to *exclude* is now the technical term. Thus in the *Boke of St. Albans*, ed 1496: — 'For to speke of hawkes; Fyrst they ben egges, and afterwarde they ben *dysclosed* hawkys.' And 'comynly goshawkes ben *disclosyd* assoone as the choughs.'

Will be some danger: Which for to prevent,
 I have, in quick determination,
 Thus set it down; He shall with speed to England,
 For the demand of our neglected tribute:
 Haply, the seas, and countries different,
 With variable objects, shall expel
 This something-settled matter in his heart,
 Whereon his brains still beating, puts him thus
 From fashion of himself. What think you on't?

Pol. It shall do well: But yet, I do believe,
 The origin and commencement of his grief
 Sprung from neglected love. — How now, Ophelia?
 You need not tell us what lord Hamlet said;
 We heard it all. — My lord, do as you please;
 But, if you hold it fit, after the play,
 Let his queen mother all alone entreat him
 To show his grief; let her be round³¹ with him;
 And I'll be plac'd, so please you, in the ear
 Of all their conference: If she find him not,
 To England send him; or confine him, where
 Your wisdom best shall think.

King. It shall be so:
 Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go.
[Exeunt.]

SCENE II. *A Hall in the same.*

Enter HAMLET, and certain Players.

Ham. Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounc'd it to you, trippingly on the tongue: but if you mouth it, as many of our players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines¹. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus; but use all gently: for in the very torrent, tempest, and (as I may say)

³¹ See on Act ii. Sc. 2.

¹ 'Have you never seen a stalking stamping player, that will raise a tempest with his tongue, and thunder with his heels.' — *The Puritan, a Comedy*. The first quarto has, 'I'd rather hear a town-bull bellow, than such a fellow speak my lines.'

whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance, that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul, to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings²: who, for the most part, are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows, and noise: I would have such a fellow whipped for o'er-doing Termagant³; it out-herods Herod: 'Pray you, avoid it.

² The first quarto reads, 'of the ignorant.' Our ancient theatres were far from the commodious elegant structures which later times have seen. The *pit* was, truly what its name denotes, an unfloored space in the area of the house, sunk considerably beneath the level of the stage; and, by ancient representations, one may judge that it was necessary to elevate the head very much to get a view of the performance. Hence this part of the audience were called *groundlings*. Jonson, in the Induction to Bartholomew Fair calls them 'the understanding gentlemen of the ground;' and Shirley, 'grave understanders.'

'No shows, no dance, and what you most delight in,
Grave understanders, here's no target-fighting.'

Sir W. Cornwallis calls the ignorant *earthlings*. 'I have not been ashamed to adventure mine eares with a ballad-singer, — the profit to see *earthlings* satisfied with such coarse stuffe,' — &c. — *Essay* 15, ed. 1623.

³ *Termagaunt* is the name given in old romances to the tempestuous god of the Saracens. He is usually joined with *Mahound* or *Mahomet*. Hall mentions him in his first Satire: —

Nor fright the reader with the Pagan vaunt
Of mighty *Mahound* and great *Termagaunt*.'

Dr. Percy and Dr. Johnson, misled by the etymology given by Junius, have made a Saracen divinity of Termagant; and Mr. Gifford inclines to this opinion in a note on Massinger's *Renegado*, Act i. Sc. 1. It appears more probable that our old writers borrowed it from the *Tervagant* of the French, or the *Trivigante* of the Italian Romances. A learned foreigner has said, '*Trivigante*, whom the predecessors of Ariosto always couple with *Appolino*, is really Diana Trivia, the sister of the classical Apollo, whose worship, and the lunar sacrifices which it demanded, had been always preserved among the Scythians.' *Quarterly Review*, vol. xxi. p. 515. — May we not rather imagine that the Hermes Trismegistus is the deity meant; for Trimegisto and Termegisto are also names of this Termagaunt?

Davenant has given the same etymology of Termagant, *Termagnus*, i. e. *Τρισημέγιστος*. And resolute John Florio calls him '*Termigisto*, a great boaster, quareller, killer, tamer or ruler of the universe; the child of the earthquake and of the thunder, the brother of death.' — *World of Words*, 1611. Hence this personage was introduced into the old mysteries and moralities as a demon of outrageous and violent demeanour; or as Bale says, '*Termagauntes* altogether, and very devils incarnate:' and again, 'this terrible

1 *Play*. I warrant your honour.

Ham. Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action: with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature: for any thing so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first, and now, was, and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirrour up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time, his form and pressure⁴. Now this, overdone, or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of which one, must, in your allowance⁵, o'erweigh a whole theatre of others. O, there be players, that I have seen play, — and heard others praise, and that highly, — not to speak it profanely, that, neither having the accent of christians, nor the gait of christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted, and bellowed, that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.

1 *Play*. I hope, we have reformed that indifferently with us.

Ham. O, reform it altogether. And let those, that play your clowns, speak no more than is set down for them: for there be of them, that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too; though, in the mean time, some necessary question⁶

Termagaunt, this Nero, this Pharaoh.' A tyrant was always 'a part to tear a cat in.' — The murder of the innocents was a favourite subject for a mystery; and wherever Herod is introduced, he plays the part of a vaunting braggart, a tyrant of tyrants, and does indeed outdo *Termagant*.

4 *Pressure* is impression, resemblance.

5 i. e. approval, estimation. Vide *King Lear*, Act ii. Sc. 4.

6 The quarto, 1603, '*Point in the play then to be observed.*' Afterwards is added, '*And then you have some again that keeps one suit of jests, as a man is known by one suit of apparel; and gentlemen quotes his jests down in their tables before they come to the play, as thus: — Cannot you stay till I eat my porridge; and you owe me a quarter's wages; and your beer is sour; and blabbering with his lips: And thus keeping in his cinque a pace of*

of the play be then to be considered: that's villanous: and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it. Go, make you ready. — [*Exeunt* Players.]

Enter POLONIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

How now, my lord? will the king hear this piece of work?

Pol. And the queen too, and that presently.

Ham. Bid the players make haste. —

[*Exit* POLONIUS.]

Will you two help to hasten them?

Both. Ay, my lord.

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.]

Ham. What, ho; Horatio!

Enter HORATIO.

Hor. Here, sweet lord, at your service.

Ham. Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man
As e'er my conversation cop'd withal.

Hor. O, my dear lord, — —

Ham.

Nay, do not think I flatter:

For what advancement may I hope from thee,
That no revenue hast, but thy good spirits,
To feed, and clothe thee? Why should the poor be
flatter'd?

No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp;
And crook the pregnant⁷ hinges of the knee,
Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost thou hear?
Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice,
And could of men distinguish her election,
She hath seal'd thee for herself: for thou hast been
As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing!

jests; when, God knows, the warme Clown cannot make a jest unless by chance, as the blind man catcheth a hare: Masters, tell him of it.' — This passage was evidently levelled at the particular folly of some injudicious player contemporary with the poet.

⁷ *Pregnant*, quick, ready.

A man, that fortune's buffets and rewards
 Hast ta'en with equal thanks; and bless'd are those,
 Whose blood and judgment⁸ are so well co-mingled⁹,
 That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger
 To sound what stop she please: Give me that man
 That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
 In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,
 As I do thee. — Something too much of this. —
 There is a play to-night before the king;
 One scene of it comes near the circumstance,
 Which I have told thee of my father's death.
 I pr'ythee, when thou seest that act a-foot;
 Even with the very comment of thy soul
 Observe my uncle: if his occulted guilt
 Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
 It is a damned ghost that we have seen;
 And my imaginations are as foul
 As Vulcan's stithy¹⁰. Give him heedful note:
 For I mine eyes will rivet to his face¹¹;
 And, after, we will both our judgments join
 In censure¹² of his seeming.

Hor. Well, my lord:
 If he steal aught, the whilst this play is playing,
 And scape detecting, I will pay the theft.

Ham. They are coming to the play; I must be idle:
 Get you a place.

8 'According to the doctrine of the four humours, *desire* and *confidence* were seated in the blood, and *judgment* in the phlegm, and the due mixtures of the humours made a perfect character.'
Johnson.

9 Quarto, 1604 — 'co-medled.'

10 *Vulcan's stithy* is *Vulcan's workshop* or *smithy*; *stith* being an *anvil*.

11 Here the first quarto has: —

'And if he do not blench and change at that,
 It is a damned ghost that we have seen;
Horatio, have a care, observe him well.

Hor. My lord, mine eyes shall still be on his face,
 And not the smallest alteration
 That shall appear in him, but I shall note it.'

12 i. e. judgment, opinion.

Danish March. A Flourish. Enter King, Queen, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and Others.

King. How fares our cousin Hamlet?

Ham. Excellent, i'faith; of the chameleon's dish: I eat the air, promise-crammed; You cannot feed capons so.

King. I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet; these words are not mine.

Ham. No, nor mine now¹³. My lord, — you played once in the university, you say? [*To POLONIUS.*

Pol. That did I, my lord; and was accounted a good actor.

Ham. And what did you enact?

Pol. I did enact Julius Caesar: I was killed i'the Capitol; Brutus killed me¹⁴.

Ham. It was a brute part of him, to kill so capital a calf there. — Be the players ready?

Ros. Ay, my lord; they stay¹⁵ upon your patience.

Queen. Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

¹³ A man's words, says the proverb, are *his own* no longer than he keeps them unspoken.

¹⁴ A Latin play on the subject of Caesar's death was performed at Christ Church, in Oxford, in 1582. Malone thinks that there was an English play on the same subject previous to Shakspeare's. Caesar was killed in *Pompey's portico*, and not in the Capitol: but the error is at least as old as Chaucer's time.

This Julius to the *Capitolie* wente
Upon a day, that he was wont to gon,
And in the *Capitolie* anon him hente
This false Brutus and his other soon,
And sticked him with *bodekins* anon
With many a wound, &c.

Chaucer's Monkes Tale, v. 14621.

I have cited this passage to show that Chaucer uses *bodkin* for *dagger*, like Shakspeare. See p. 82.

¹⁵ i. e. 'they wait upon your *sufferance* or *will*.' Johnson would have changed the word to *pleasure*; but Shakspeare has again used it in a similar sense in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Act iii. Sc. 1: —

'Ge, —————
And think my *patience* more than thy desert
Is privilege for thy departure hence.'

Ham. No, good mother, here's metal more attractive.

Pol. O ho! do you mark that? [To the King.

Ham. Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

[Lying down at OPHELIA'S Feet.

Oph. No, my lord.

Ham. I mean, my head upon your lap?

Oph. Ay, my lord.

Ham. Do you think, I meant contray¹⁶ matters?

Oph. I think nothing, my lord.

Ham. That's a fair thought to lie between maid's legs.

Oph. What is, my lord?

Ham. Nothing.

Oph. You are merry, my lord.

Ham. Who, I?

Oph. Ay, my lord.

Ham. O! your only jig-maker¹⁷. What should a man do, but be merry? for, look you, how cheer-fully my mother looks, and my father died within these two hours.

Oph. Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

Ham. So long? Nay, then let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of sables¹⁸. O heavens! die two months ago, and not forgotten yet? Then there's hope, a great man's memory may outlive his life half a year: But, by'r-lady, he must build churches then: or else shall he suffer not thinking on, with the hobby-

¹⁶ This is the reading of the quarto 1603. The quarto 1604 and the folio read *country*.

¹⁷ See note on Act ii. Sc. 2, p. 74. It may here be added that a *jig* sometimes signified a spritely dunce, as at present. In addition to the examples before given, take the following from Ford's *Love's Sacrifice*: — 'O Giacopo! Petrarch was a dunce, Dante a *jig-maker*, Sannazar a goose, and Ariosto a puck-first to me.' — Act ii. Sc. 2.

¹⁸ i. e. a dress, ornamented with the rich fur of that name, said to be the skin of the sable martin. By the statute of apparel, 24 Hen. VIII. c. 13, it is ordained that none under the degree of an earl may use sables. Bishop, in his *Blossoms*, 1577, speaking of extravagance, says, that a thousand ducates were sometimes given for a face of *sables*. But Hamlet meant to use the word equivocally.

horse¹⁹; whose epitaph is, *For, O, for, O, the hobby-horse is forgot.*

Trumpets sound. The Dumb Show²⁰ follows.

Enter a King and a Queen, very lovingly: the Queen embracing him, and he her. She kneels, and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up, and declines his head upon her neck: lays him down upon a bank of flowers; she, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in a Fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the King's ears, and exit. The Queen returns; finds the King dead, and makes passionate action. The Poisoner, with some two or three Mutes, comes in again, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried away. The Poisoner wooes the Queen with gifts; she seems loath and unwilling awhile; but, in the end, accepts his love. [Exeunt.

Oph. What means this, my lord?

Ham. Marry, this is miching malicho²¹; it means mischief.

19 The hobby-horse, whose omission in the morris dance is so pathetically lamented in many of our old dramas, in the very words which Hamlet calls his epitaph, was long a distinguished favourite in the May Games. He was driven from his station by the Puritans, as an impious and pagan superstition; but restored after the promulgation of the Book of Sports. The hobby-horse was formed of a pasteboard horse's head, and probably a light frame made of wicker-work to form the hinder parts; this was fastened round the body of a man, and covered with a footcloth, which nearly reached the ground, and concealed the legs of the performer; who displayed his antic equestrian skill, and performed various juggling tricks, *wigh-hie-ing* or neighing, to the no small delight of the bystanders.

20 This dumb show appears to be superfluous, and even incongruous; for as the murder is there circumstantially represented, the King ought to have been struck with it then, without waiting for the dialogue.

21 *Miching malicho* is lurking mischief, or evil doing. To *mich*, for to skulk, to lurk, was an old English verb in common use in Shakspeare's time; and *malicho* or *malhecho*, misdeed, he has borrowed from the Spanish. Many stray words of Spanish and Italian

Oph. Belike, this show imports the argument of the play.

Enter Prologue.

Ham. We shall know by this fellow: the players cannot keep counsel, they'll tell all.

Oph. Will he tell us what this show meant?

Ham. Ay, or any show that you'll show him: Be not you ashamed to show, he'll not shame to tell you what it means²².

Oph. You are naught, you are naught; I'll mark the play.

Pro. *For us, and for our tragedy
Here stooping to your clemency,
We beg your hearing patiently.*

Ham. Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring?

Oph. 'Tis brief, my lord.

Ham. As woman's love.

Enter a King and a Queen.

P. King. Full thirty times hath Phoebus' cart²³ gone round

were then affectedly used in common conversation, as we have seen French used in more recent times. The quarto spells the word *mallico*. Our ancestors were not particular in orthography, and often spelt according to the ear.

²² The conversation with Ophelia, as Steevens remarks, cannot fail to disgust every modern reader. It was no doubt such as was current in society in that age, which had not yet learnt to throw a veil of decency over corrupt manners. Yet still I think that such discourse would not have been put into the mouth of Hamlet by the poet, had he not meant it to mark the feigned madness of Hamlet the stronger from its inconsistency with his character as a prince and polished gentleman.

²³ *Cart*, car, or chariot, were used indiscriminately for any carriage formerly. Mr. Todd has adduced the following passage from the Comical History of Alphonsus, by R. G. 1599, which, he thinks, Shakspeare meant to burlesque: —

“Thrice ten times Phoebus with his golden beames
Hath compassed the circle of the skie;
Thrice ten times Ceres hath her workemen hir'd,
And fill'd her barnes with fruteful crops of corne,
Since first in priesthood I did lead my life.”

Neptune's salt wash, and Tellus' orb'd ground;
 And thirty dozen moons, with borrow'd sheen,
 About the world have times twelve thirties been;
 Since love our hearts, and Hymen did our hands,
 Unite commutual in most sacred hands.

P. Queen. So many journeys may the sun and moon
 Make us again count o'er, ere love be done!
 But, woe is me, you are so sick of late,
 So far from cheer, and from your former state,
 That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust,
 Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must:
 For women fear too much, even as they love²⁴;
 And women's fear and love hold quantity;
 In neither aught, or in extremity.
 Now, what my love is, proof hath made you know;
 And as my love is siz'd²⁵, my fear is so.
 Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear;
 Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.

P. King. 'Faith, I must leave thee, love, and
 shortly too;
 My operant²⁶ powers their functions leave to do;
 And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,
 Honour'd, belov'd; and, haply, one as kind
 For husband shalt thou — —

P. Queen. O, confound the rest!
 Such love must needs be treason in my breast;
 In second husband let me be accurst!
 None wed the second, but who kill'd the first.

Ham. That's wormwood.

P. Queen. The instances²⁷, that second marriage
 move,

²⁴ This line is omitted in the folio. There appears to have been a line omitted in the quarto which should have rhymed to this.

²⁵ Cleopatra expresses herself much in the same manner for the loss of Antony: —

‘———— our size of sorrow

Proportion'd to our cause, must be as great

As that which makes it.’

²⁶ i. e. active.

²⁷ Instances are motives. See King Richard III. Act iii. Sc. 2, p. 72, note 4.

Are base respects of thrift, but none of love;
A second time I kill my husband dead,
When second husband kisses me in bed.

P. King. I do believe, you think what now you
speak;

But, what we do determine, oft we break.
Purpose is but the slave to memory²⁸;
Of violent birth, but poor validity:
Which now, like fruit unripe, sticks on the tree;
But fall, unshaken, when they mellow be.
Most necessary 'tis, that we forget
To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt:
What to ourselves in passion we propose,
The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.
The violence of either grief or joy
Their own enactures²⁹ with themselves destroy;
Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament;
Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.
This world is not for aye; nor 'tis not strange,
That even our loves should with our fortunes change;
For 'tis a question left us yet to prove,
Whether love lead fortune, or else fortune love.
The great man down, you mark his favourite flies,
The poor advanc'd makes friends of enemies.
And hitherto doth love on fortune tend:
For who not needs, shall never lack a friend;
And who in want a hollow friend doth try,
Directly seasons³⁰ him his enemy.
But, orderly to end where I begun, —
Our wills, and fates, do so contrary run,
That our devices still are overthrown;
Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own:

28 'But thought's the slave of life.' — *King Henry IV.* Part i.

29 i. e. their own determinations, what they enact.

30 See note on Act i. Sc. 3. p. 31. 'This quaint phrase (says Steevens), *infests* almost every ancient English composition.' Why *infests*? Surely it is as forcible and intelligible as many other metaphorical expressions retained in the language. It has been remarked that our ancestors were much better judges of the powers of language than we are. The Latin writers did not scruple to apply their verb *condire* in the same manner.

So think thou wilt no second husband wed;
But die thy thoughts, when thy first lord is dead.

P. Queen. Nor earth to me give food, nor heaven
light!

Sport and repose lock from me, day, and night!
To desperation turn my trust and hope!

An anchor's³¹ cheer in prison be my scope!

Each opposite, that blanks the face of joy,
Meet what I would have well, and it destroy!

Both here, and hence, pursue me lasting strife,
If, once a widow, ever I be wife!

Ham. If she should break it now, — — [To OPH.

P. King. 'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here
a while;

My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile
The tedious day with sleep. [Sleeps.

P. Queen. Sleep rock thy brain;

And never come mischance between us twain! [Exit.

Ham. Madam, how like you this play?

Queen. The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

Ham. O, but she'll keep her word.

King. Have you heard the argument? Is there no
offence in't?

Ham. No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest; no
offence i'the world.

King. What do you call the play?

Ham. The mouse-trap³². Marry, how? Tropically³³.
This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna:
Gonzago is the duke's name³⁴, his wife, Baptista: you

31 *Anchor's* for *anchoret's*. Thus in Hall's second Satire, b. iv.: —
'Sit seven years pining in an *anchor's cheyre*.
To win some patched shreds of minivere.'

32 [The mouse-trap,] i. e.

'————— the thing

In which he'll catch the conscience of the king.'

33 First quarto — *trapically*. It is evident that a pun was intended.

34 [Gonzago is the *duke's* name, his wife *Baptista*:] all the old
copies read thus. Yet in the dumb show we have, 'Enter a *King*
and *Queen*;' and at the end of this speech, 'Lucianus, nephew to
the king.' This seeming inconsistency, however, may be recon-
ciled. Though the interlude is the *image* of the murder of the *duke*

shall see anon; 'tis a knavish piece of work: But what of that? your majesty, and we that have free souls, it touches us not: Let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung. —

Enter LUCIANUS.

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.

Oph. You are as good as a chorus³⁴, my lord.

Ham. I could interpret between you and your love, if I could see the puppets dallying.

Oph. You are keen, my lord, you are keen.

Ham. It would cost you a groaning, to take off my edge.

Oph. Still better, and worse.

Ham. So you mistake³⁶ your husbands. — Begin, murderer; — leave thy damnable faces, and begin. Come; — —

— — The croaking raven
Doth bellow for revenge.

Luc. Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing;

Confederate season, else no creature seeing;
Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds³⁷ collected,

of Vienna, or in other words founded upon that story, the poet might make the principal person in *his fable* a king. *Baptista* is never used singly by the Italians, being uniformly compounded with *Giam* and *Giovanni*. It is needless to remark that it is always the name of a man.

35 The use to which Shakspeare put the *chorus* may be seen in King Henry V. Every motion or puppet-show was accompanied by an *interpreter* or showman. Thus in The Two Gentlemen of Verona: —

‘O excellent motion: O exceeding puppet!
Now will he *interpret* for her.’

36 The first quarto — ‘So you *must take* your husband.’ Hamlet puns upon the word *mistake*: ‘So you *mis-take*, or *take* your husbands *amiss* for better and worse.’ The word was often thus misused for any thing done wrongfully, and even for privy stealing. In one of Bastard’s Epigrams, 1598, cited by Steevens —

‘— — none that seeth her face and making
Will judge her stol’n but by *mistaking*.’

37 ‘Midnight weeds.’ Thus in Macbeth: —

Root of hemlock, *digg’d i’ the dark*.’

With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,
Thy natural magic and dire property,
On wholesome life usurp immediately.

[*Pours the Poison into the Sleeper's Ears.*]

Ham. He poisons him i'the garden for his estate.
His name's Gonzago: the story is extant, and written
in very choice Italian: You shall see anon, how the
murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

Oph. The king rises.

Ham. What! frightened with false fire!

Queen. How fares my lord?

Pol. Give o'er the play.

King. Give me some light: — away!

Pol. Lights, lights, lights!

[*Exeunt all but HAMLET and HORATIO.*]

Ham. Why, let the stricken deer go weep³⁸,

The hart ungalled play:

For some must watch, while some must sleep;

Thus runs the world away. —

Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers, (if the
rest of my fortunes turn Turk³⁹ with me,) with two
Provincial roses on my razed⁴⁰ shoes, get me a fel-
lowship in a cry⁴¹ of players[!], sir?

Hor. Half a share⁴².

38 See note on *As You Like It*, Act ii. Sc. 1, p. 124.

39 To *turn Turk* was a familiar phrase for any violent change of condition or character.

40 [*Provincial roses*] on my *razed shoes*. *Provincial* was erroneously changed to *Provençal*, at the suggestion of Warton. Mr. Douce rectified the error by showing that the *Provincial* roses took their name from *Provins*, in Lower Brie, and not from *Provence*. *Razed shoes* are most probably *embroidered shoes*. The quarto reads, *rac'd*. To *race*, or *rase*, was to *stripe*.

41 [*A cry of players*.] It was usual to call a *pack* of hounds a *cry*; from the French *meute de chiens*: it is here humorously applied to a *troop* or *company* of players. It is used again in *Coriolanus*: Menenius says to the citizens, 'You have made good work, you and your *cry*.' In the very curious catalogue of *The Companies of Bestys*, given in *The Boke of St. Albans*, many equally singular terms may be found, which seem to have exercised the wit and ingenuity of our ancestors; as a *thrive* of throshers, a *scull* or *shoal* of monks, &c.

42 The players were paid not by salaries, but by *shares* or *portions* of the profit, according to merit. See Malone's *Account of the Ancient Theatres*, *passim*.

Ham. A whole one, I.

For thou dost know, O Damon dear,
This realm dismantled was
Of Jove himself; and now reigns here
A very, very — peacock⁴³.

Hor. You might have rhymed.

Ham. O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for
a thousand pound. Didst perceive?

Hor. Very well, my lord.

Ham. Upon the talk of the poisoning, — —

Hor. I did very well note him.

Ham. Ah, ha! — Come, some music; come, the
recorders⁴⁴. —

For if the king like not the comedy,
Why then, belike, — he likes it not, perdy⁴⁵.

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Come, some music.

Guil. Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

Ham. Sir, a whole history.

Guil. The king, sir, — —

Ham. Ay, sir, what of him?

Guil. Is, in his retirement, marvellous distempered.

Ham. With drink, sir?

Guil. No, my lord, with choler.

43 [A very, very — *peacock*.] The old copies read *paiock*, and *paiocke*. The *peacock* was as proverbially used for a *proud fool* as the *lapwing* for a silly one. 'Pavoneggiare, to court it, to brave it, to *peacockise* it, to wantonise it, to get up and down fondly, gazing upon himself as a peacocke does.' — *Florio. Ital. Dict.* 1598. Theobald proposed to read *paddock*; and in the last scene Hamlet bestows this opprobrious name upon the king. Mr. Blakeway has suggested that we might read *puttock*, which means a base degenerate hawk, a kite: which Shakspeare does indeed contrast with the eagle in *Cymbeline*, Act i. Sc. 2: —

'I chose an *eagle*, and did avoid a *puttock*.'

44 [The *recorders*.] See note on a *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act i. Sc. 1. It is difficult to settle exactly the form of this instrument: old writers in general make no distinction between a flute, a pipe, and a recorder; but Hawkins has shown clearly, from a passage in Lord Bacon's *Natural History*, that the flute and the recorder were distinct instruments.

45 *Perdy* is a corruption of the French *par Dieu*.

Ham. Your wisdom should show itself more richer, to signify this to the doctor; for, for me to put him to his purgation, would, perhaps, plunge him into more choler.

Guil. Good my lord, put your discourse into some frame, and start not so wildly from my affair.

Ham. I am tame, sir: — pronounce.

Guil. The queen, your mother, in most great affliction of spirit, hath sent me to you.

Ham. You are welcome.

Guil. Nay, good my lord, this courtesy is not of the right breed. If it shall please you to make me a wholesome answer, I will do your mother's commandment: if not, your pardon, and my return shall be the end of my business.

Ham. Sir, I cannot.

Guil. What, my lord?

Ham. Make you a wholesome answer; my wit's diseased: But, sir, such answer as I can make, you shall command; or, rather, as you say, my mother: therefore no more, but to the matter; My mother, you say, — —

Ros. Then thus she says: Your behaviour hath struck her into amazement and admiration.

Ham. O wonderful son, that can so astonish a mother! — But is there no sequel at the heels of this mother's admiration? impart.

Ros. She desires to speak with you in her closet, ere you go to bed.

Ham. We shall obey, were she ten times our mother. Have you any further trade with us?

Ros. My lord, you once did love me.

Ham. And do still, by these pickers and stealers⁴⁶.

Ros. Good my lord, what is your cause of distemper? you do, surely, but bar the door upon your own liberty, if you deny your griefs to your friend.

⁴⁶ i. e. by these hands. The phrase is taken from our church catechism, where the catechumen is taught to keep his hands from picking and stealing. *Whalley.*

Ham. Sir, I lack advancement.

Ros. How can that be, when you have the voice of the king himself for your succession in Denmark?

Ham. Ay, sir, but, *While the grass grows*⁴⁷, — the proverb is something musty.

Enter the Players, with Recorders.

O, the recorders: — let me see one. — To withdraw with you⁴⁸ — Why do you go about to recover the wind of me⁴⁹, as if you would drive me into a toil?

Guil. O, my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly⁵⁰.

Ham. I do not well understand that. Will you play upon this pipe?

Guil. My lord, I cannot.

Ham. I pray you.

Guil. Believe me, I cannot.

Ham. I do beseech you.

Guil. I know no touch of it, my lord.

Ham. 'Tis as easy as lying: govern these ventages⁵¹ with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your

47 While the grass grows the horse starves.

48 'To withdraw with you.' Malone added here a stage direction [*Taking Guild. aside.*] Steevens thinks it an answer to a motion Guildenstern had used, for Hamlet to withdraw with him. I think that it means no more than 'to draw back with you,' to leave that scent or trail. It is a hunting term, like that which follows.

49 'To recover the wind of me.' This is a term which has been left unexplained. It is borrowed from hunting, as the context shows; and means, to take advantage of the animal pursued, by getting to the windward of it, that it may not scent its pursuers. 'Observs how the wind is, that you may set the net so as the hare and wind may come together; if the wind be sideways it may do well enough, but never if it blow over the net into the hare's face, for he will scent both it and you at a distance.' — *Gentleman's Recreation*.

50 Hamlet may say with propriety, 'I do not well understand that.' Perhaps Guildenstern means, 'If my duty to the king makes me too bold, my love to you makes importunate even to rudeness.'

51 The *ventages* are the holes of the pipe. The *stops* means the mode of stopping those ventages to produce notes. Malone has made it the 'sounds produced.' Thus in King Henry V. Prologue: —

'Rumour is a pipe ———
And of so easy and plain a stop.'

mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops.

Guil. But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony; I have not the skill.

Ham. Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me? You would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass: and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ; yet cannot you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think, I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, you cannot play upon me.

Enter POLONIUS.

God bless you, sir!

Pol. My lord, the queen would speak with you, and presently.

Ham. Do you see yonder cloud, that's almost in shape of a camel?

Pol. By the mass, and 'tis like a camel, indeed.

Ham. Methinks, it is like a weasel.

Pol. It is backed like a weasel.

Ham. Or, like a whale?

Pol. Very like a whale.

Ham. Then will I come to my mother by and by. — They fool me to the top of my bent⁵². — I will come by and by.

Pol. I will say so.

[*Exit* POLONIUS.]

Ham. By and by is easily said. — Leave me, friends.

[*Exeunt* ROS. GUIL. HOR. &c.]

'Tis now the very witching time of night;
When churchyards yawn, and hell itself breathes out
Contagion to this world: Now could I drink hot blood,
And do such bitter business as the day⁵³

⁵² See note on Act ii. Sc. 2.

⁵³ The quarto reads: —

'And do such business as the bitter day,' &c.

Would quake to look on. Soft; now to my mother. —
 O, heart, lose not thy nature; let not ever
 The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom:
 Let me be cruel, not unnatural:
 I will speak daggers to her⁵⁴, but use none;
 My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites:
 How in my words soever she be shent⁵⁵,
 To give them seals never, my soul, consent! [Exit.

SCENE III. *A Room in the same.*

Enter King, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

King. I like him not; nor stands it safe with us,
 To let his madness range. Therefore, prepare you;
 I your commission will forthwith despatch,
 And he to England shall along with you:
 The terms of our estate may not endure
 Hazard so near us, as doth hourly grow
 Out of his lunacies.

Guil. We will ourselves provide:
 Most holy and religious fear it is,
 To keep those many many bodies safe,
 That live, and feed, upon your majesty.

Ros. The single and peculiar life is bound,
 With all the strength and armour of the mind,
 To keep itself from 'noyance; but much more
 That spirit, upon whose weal¹ depend and rest
 The lives of many. The cease of majesty

⁵⁴ 'They are pestilent fellows, they speak nothing but bodkins.'
 — *Return from Parnassus*. In the *Aulularia* of Plautus a phrase
 not less singular occurs: —

'*Me. Quia miseri cerebrum excutiant,
 Tua dicta soror: lapides loqueris.*' Act ii. Sc. 1.

⁵⁵ To *shend* is to *injure*, whether by reproof, blows, or other-
 wise. Shakspeare generally uses *shent* for reproof, threatened
 with angry words. 'To give his words seals' is therefore to carry
 his punishment beyond *reproof*. The allusion is the sealing a deed
 to render it effective. The quarto of 1603: —

'I will speak daggers; those sharp words being spent,
 To do her wrong my soul shall ne'er consent.'

¹ Folio reads 'spirits.'

Dies not alone; but, like a gulf, doth draw
 What's near it, with it: it is a massy wheel,
 Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount,
 To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things
 Are mortis'd and adjoin'd; which, when it falls,
 Each small annexment, petty consequence,
 Attends the boist'rous ruin. Never alone
 Did the king sigh, but with a general groan.

King. Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage;
 For we will fetters put upon² this fear,
 Which now goes too free-footed.

Ros. Guil.

We will haste us.

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ and GUIL.

Enter POLONIUS.

Pol. My lord, he's going to his mother's closet:
 Behind the arras³ I'll convey myself,
 To hear the process; I'll warrant, she'll tax him home;
 And, as you said, and wisely was it said,
 'Tis meet, that some more audience, than a mother,
 Since nature makes them partial⁴, should o'erhear
 The speech, of vantage⁵. Fare you well, my liege;
 I'll call upon you ere you go to bed,
 And tell you what I know.

King.

Thanks, dear my lord.

[*Exit* POLONIUS.

O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven;
 It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,
 A brother's murder! — Pray can I not,
 Though inclination be as sharp as will⁶;

² Quarto — 'about.'

³ See King Henry IV. Part i. Act ii. Sc. 4.

⁴ '——— Matres omnes filiis

In peccato adjutrices, auxilio in paterna injuria

Solent esse' ——

Terent. Heaut. Act v. Sc. 2.

⁵ Warburton explains of *vantage*, 'by some opportunity of secret observation.' I incline to think that 'of *vantage*,' in Shakspeare's language, is for *advantage*, *commodi causa*.

⁶ i. e. 'though I was not only willing, but strongly inclined to pray, my guilt prevented me.'

My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent;
And, like a man to double business bound,
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
And both neglect. What if this cursed hand
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood?
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens,
To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy,
But to confront the visage of offence?
And what's in prayer, but this two-fold force, —
To be forestalled, ere we come to fall,
Or pardon'd, being down? Then I'll look up;
My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer
Can serve my turn? Forgive me my foul murder! —
That cannot be; since I am still possess'd
Of those effects for which I did the murder,
My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.
May one be pardon'd, and retain the offence?
In the corrupted currents of this world,
Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice;
And oft 'tis seen, the wicked prize itself
Buys out the law: But 'tis not so above:
There is no shuffling, there the action lies
In his true nature: and we ourselves compell'd,
Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
To give in evidence. What then? what rests?
Try what repentance can: What can it not?
Yet what can it, when one can not repent?
O wretched state! O bosom, black as death!
O limed⁷ soul; that struggling to be free,
Art more engag'd! Help, angels, make assay!
Bow, stubborn knees! and, heart, with strings of steel,
Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe;
All may be well! [Retires, and kneels.

Enter HAMLET.

Ham. Now might I do it, but, now he is praying;
And now I'll do't; and so he goes to heaven:

⁷ i. e. caught as with birdlime.

And so am I reveng'd? That would be scann'd⁸:
A villain kills my father; and, for that,
I, his sole son, do this same villain send
To heaven.

Why, this is hire and salary⁹, not revenge.
He took my father grossly, full of bread;
With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May;
And, how his audit stands, who knows, save heaven?
But, in our circumstance and course of thought,
'Tis heavy with him: And am I then reveng'd,
To take him in the purging of his soul,
When he is fit and season'd for his passage?
No.

Up, sword; and know thou a more horrid hent¹⁰:
When he is drunk, asleep, or in his rage;
Or in the incestuous pleasures of his bed;
At gaming, swearing; or about some act
That has no relish of salvation in't:
Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven:
And that his soul may be as damn'd, and black,
As hell, whereto it goes¹¹. My mother stays:
This physic but prolongs thy sickly days. [Exit.

8 'That would be scann'd' — that requires consideration, or ought to be estimated.

9 The quarto reads, *base and silly*.

10 Shakspeare has used the verb to *hent*, to take, to lay hold on, elsewhere; but the word is here used as a substantive, for *hold* or *opportunity*.

11 Johnson has justly exclaimed against the horrible nature of this desperate revenge; but the quotations of the commentators from other plays cotemporary with and succeeding this, show that it could not have been so horrifying to the ears of our ancestors. In times of less civilisation, revenge was held almost a sacred duty; and the purpose of the appearance of the ghost in this play is chiefly to excite Hamlet to it. The more fell and terrible the retributive act, the more meritorious it seems to have been held. The King himself in a future scene, when stimulating Laertes to kill Hamlet, says, 'Revenge should have no bounds.' Mason has observed that, horrid as this resolution of Hamlet's is, 'yet some moral may be extracted from it, as all his subsequent misfortunes were owing to this savage refinement of revenge.'

The King rises and advances.

King. My words fly up, my thoughts remain below:
Words, without thoughts, never to heaven go¹². [*Exit.*

SCENE IV. *Another Room in the same.*

Enter Queen and POLONIUS.

Pol. He will come straight. Look, you lay home
to him:

Tell him, his pranks have been too broad to bear with;
And that your grace hath screen'd and stood between
Much heat and him. I'll silence me e'en here.
'Pray you, be round with him¹.

Queen. I'll warrant you;
Fear me not: — withdraw, I hear him coming.
[*POLONIUS hides himself.*

Enter HAMLET.

Ham. Now, mother; what's the matter?

Queen. Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

Ham. Mother, you have my father much offended.

Queen. Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

Ham. Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

Queen. Why, how now, Hamlet?

Ham. What's the matter now?

Queen. Have you forgot me?

Ham. No, by the rood, not so:
You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife;
And, — 'would it were not so! — you are my mother.

Queen. Nay, then I'll set those to you that can speak.

¹² First quarto: —

'No king on earth is safe, if God's his foe.'

¹ The folio here interposes the following speech: —

'*Ham.* [*Within.*] Mother, mother, mother.'

The circumstance of Polonius' hiding himself behind the arras and the manner of his death are found in the old black letter prose *Hystory of Hamblett*.

Ham. Come, come, and sit you down; you shall not budge;

You go not, till I set you up a glass

Where you may see the inmost part of you.

Queen. What wilt thou do? thou wilt not murder me? Help, help, ho!

Pol. [Behind.] What, ho! help!

Ham. How now! a rat?
[*Draws.*

Dead, for a ducat, dead.

[*HAMLET makes a pass through the Arras.*

Pol. [Behind.] O, I am slain.

[*Falls, and dies.*

Queen. O me, what hast thou done?

Ham. Nay, I know not:
Is it the king?

[*Lifts up the Arras, and draws forth POLONIUS.*

Queen. O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!

Ham. A bloody deed; almost as bad, good mother,
As kill a king, and marry with his brother².

Queen. As kill a king!

Ham. Ay, lady, 'twas my word. —
Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!
[*To POLONIUS.*

I took thee for thy better; take thy fortune:

Thou find'st, to be too busy, is some danger. —

Leave wringing of your hands; Peace; sit you down,
And let me wring your heart: for so I shall,

² There is an idle and verbose controversy between Steevens and Malone, whether the poet meant to represent the Queen as guilty or innocent of being accessory to the murder of her husband. Surely there can be no doubt upon the matter. The Queen shows no emotion at the mock play when it is said —

'In second husband let me be accurst,

None wed the second but who kill'd the first' —

and now manifests the surprise of conscious innocence upon the subject. It should also be observed that Hamlet never directly accuses her of any guilty participation in that crime. I am happy to find my opinion, so expressed in December, 1823, confirmed by the newly discovered quarto copy of 1603; in which the Queen in a future speech is made to say —

'But, as I have a soul, I swear by heaven,
I never knew of this most horrid murder.'

If it be made of penetrable stuff:
 If damned custom have not braz'd it so,
 That it be proof and bulwark against sense.

Queen. What have I done, that thou dar'st wag thy
 tongue

In noise so rude against me?

Ham. Such an act,
 That blurs the grace and blush of modesty;
 Calls virtue, hypocrite; takes off the rose
 From the fair forehead of an innocent love,
 And sets a blister there³; makes marriage vows
 As false as dicers' oaths: O, such a deed
 As from the body of contraction plucks
 The very soul; and sweet religion makes
 A rhapsody of words: Heaven's face doth glow;
 Yea, this solidity and compound mass,
 With tristful visage, as against the doom,
 Is thought-sick at the act⁴.

Queen. Ah me, what act,
 That roars so loud, and thunders in the index⁵?

Ham. Look here upon this picture, and on this;
 The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.
 See, what a grace was seated on this brow:
 Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;
 An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;
 A station⁶ like the herald Mercury,

3 '————— takes off the rose

From the fair forehead of an innocent love.' &c.

One would think by the ludicrous gravity with which Steevens and Malone take this figurative expression in a literal sense, that they were unused to the language of poetry, especially to the adventurous metaphors of Shakspeare. Mr. Boswell's note is short and to the purpose. '*Rose* is put generally for the ornament, the grace of an innocent love.' Ophelia describes Hamlet as —

'The expectancy and rose of the fair state.'

4 The quarto of 1604 gives this passage thus: —

'————— Heaven's face does glow

O'er this solidity and compound mass

With heated visage, as against the doom,

Is thought-sick at the act.'

5 The *index*, or table of contents, was formerly placed at the beginning of books. In Othello, Act ii. Sc. 7, we have — '*an index* and obscure *prologue* to the history of foul and lustful thoughts.'

6 It is evident from this passage that whole length pictures of

New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;
 A combination, and a form, indeed,
 Where every god did seem to set his seal,
 To give the world assurance of a man:
 This was your husband. — Look you now, what follows:

Here is your husband; like a mildew'd ear,
 Blasting his wholesome brother⁷. Have you eyes?
 Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,
 And batten⁸ on this moor? Ha! have you eyes?
 You cannot call it, love: for, at your age,
 The hey-day in the blood is tame, it's humble,
 And waits upon the judgment; And what judgment
 Would step from this to this? [Sense⁹, sure, you have,
 Else could you not have motion: But, sure, that sense
 Is apoplex'd: for madness would not err;
 Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd,
 But it reserv'd some quantity of choice,
 To serve in such a difference.] What devil was't
 That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind¹⁰?
 [Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,
 Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,
 Or but a sickly part of one true sense
 Could not so mope¹¹.]

the two kings were formerly introduced. *Station* does not mean the spot where any one is placed, but the *act of standing*, the *attitude*. So in *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act iii. Sc. 3: —

'Her motion and her *station* are as one.'

Without this explanation it might be conceived that the compliment designed for the attitude of the King was bestowed on the place where Mercury is represented as standing.

7 Here the allusion is to Pharaoh's dream. Genesis, xii.

8 i. e. to feed rankly or grossly: it is usually applied to the fattening of animals. Marlowe has it for 'to grow fat.' *Bat* is the old word for *increase*; whence we have *battle*, *batten*, *batful*.

9 *Sense* here is not used for *reason*; but for *sensation*, *feeling*, or *perception*: as before in this scene: —

'That it be proof and bulwark against *sense*.'

Warburton, misunderstanding the passage, proposed to read *notion* instead of *motion*. The whole passage in brackets is omitted in the folio.

10 'The hoodwinke play, or *hoodman blind*, in some place, called *blindmanbuf*.' — *Baret*. It appears also to have been called *blind hob*. It is *hob-man blind* in the quarto of 1603.

11 i. e. could not be so *dull and stupid*.

O shame! where is thy blush? Rebellious hell,
If thou canst mutine¹² in a matron's bones,
To flaming youth, let virtue be as wax,
And melt in her own fire¹⁶; proclaim no shame,
When the compulsive ardour gives the charge;
Since frost itself as actively doth burn,
And reason panders will.

Queen. O Hamlet, speak no more:
Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul;
And there I see such black and grained¹⁴ spots,
As will not leave their tinct.

Ham. Nay, but to live
In the rank sweat of an enseamed¹⁵ bed;
Stew'd in corruption; honeying, and making love
Over the nasty sty; — —

Queen. O, speak to me no more:
These words, like daggers, enter in mine ears:
No more, sweet Hamlet.

Ham. A murderer, and a villain;
A slave, that is not twentieth part the tythe
Of your precedent lord: — a vice¹⁶ of kings:
A cutpurse of the empire and the rule;

¹² *Mutine* for *mutiny*. This is the old form of the verb. Shakspeare calls *mutineers* *mutines* in a subsequent scene; but this is, I believe, peculiar to him: they were called *mutiners* anciently.

¹³ Thus in the quarto of 1603: —

'Why appetite with you is in the wane,
Your blood runs backward now from whence it came:
Who'll chide hot blood within a virgin's heart
When lust shall dwell within a matron's breast.'

¹⁴ 'Grained spots;' that is, dyed in grain, deeply imbued.

¹⁵ i. e. greasy, rank, gross. It is a term borrowed from falconry. It is well known that the *seam* of any animal was the fat or tallow; and a hawk was said to be *enseamed* when she was too fat or gross for flight. By some confusion of terms, however, 'to *en-seam* a hawk' was used for 'to purge her of glut and grease;' by analogy it should have been *unseam*. Beaumont and Fletcher, in *The False One*, use *inseamed* in the same manner: —

'His lechery *inseamed* upon him.'

It should be remarked, that the quarto of 1603 reads *incestuous*; as does that of 1611.

¹⁶ i. e. 'the low mimic, the counterfeit, a dizard, or common vice and jester, *counterfeiting* the gestures of any man.' — *Fleming*. Shakspeare afterwards calls him a *king of shreds and patches*, alluding to the party-coloured habit of the *vice* or fool in a play.

That from a shelf the precious diadem stole,
And put it in his pocket!

Queen.

No more.

*Enter Ghost*¹⁷.

Ham.

A king

Of shreds and patches: —

Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,
You heavenly guards! — What would your gracious
figure?

Queen. Alas, he's mad.

Ham. Do you not come your tardy son to chide,
That, laps'd in time and passion¹⁸, lets go by
The important acting of your dread command?
O, say!

Ghost. Do not forget: — This visitation
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.
But, look! amazement on thy mother sits:
O, step between her and her fighting soul;
Conceit¹⁹ in weakest bodies strongest works;
Speak to her, Hamlet.

Ham.

How is it with you, lady?

Queen. Alas, how is't with you?

That you do bend your eye on vacancy,
And with the incorporal air do hold discourse?
Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep;
And, as the sleeping soldiers in the alarm,
Your bedded hair, like life in excrements²⁰;

¹⁷ The first quarto adds, '*in his night-gown.*'

¹⁸ 'Laps'd in time and passion.' Johnson explains this — 'That having suffered *time* to *slip* and *passion* to *cool*, let's go by,' &c. This explanation is confirmed by the quarto of 1603:

'Do you not come your tardy son to chide,
That I thus long have let revenge slip by.'

¹⁹ *Conceit* for *conception*, *imagination*. This was the force of the word among our ancestors. Thus in *The Rape of Lucrece*:

'And the *conceited* painter was so nice.'

²⁰ 'The hair is excrementitious; that is, without life or sensation; yet those very hairs, as if they had life, start up,' &c. So *Macheth*: —

'———— my fell of hair

Would at a dismal treatise rouse and stir

As life were in't.'

Starts up, and stands on end. O gentle son,
Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper
Sprinkle cool patience. Whereon do you look?

Ham. On him! on him! — Look you, how pale he glares!
His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,
Would make them capable²¹. — Do not look upon me;
Lest, with this piteous action, you convert
My stern affects²²: then what I have to do
Will want true colour; tears, perchance, for blood.

Queen. To whom do you speak this?

Ham. Do you see nothing there?

Queen. Nothing at all; yet all, that is, I see.

Ham. Nor did you nothing hear?

Queen. No, nothing, but ourselves.

Ham. Why, look you there! look, how it steals away!
My father, in his habit as he liv'd!

Look, where he goes, even now, out at the portal!
[Exit Ghost.

This bodiless creation ecstasy²³
Is very cunning in.

²¹ *Capable* for *susceptible*, *intelligent*, i. e. would excite in them capacity to understand. Thus in *King Richard III.*: —

‘—— O ’tis a parlous boy,

Bold, quick, ingenious, forward, *capable*.’

²² ‘My stern *affects*.’ All former editions read — ‘My stern *effects*.’ *Effects*, for actions, deeds, effected,’ says Malone! We should certainly read *affects*, i. e. dispositions, affections of the mind: as in that disputed passage of *Othello*: — ‘the young *affects* in me defunct.’

It is remarkable that we have the same error in *Measure for Measure*, Act iii. Sc. 1. p. 47: —

‘———— Thou art not certain

For thy complexion shifts to strange *effects*

After the moon.’

Dr. Johnson saw the error in that play, and proposed to read *affects*. But the present passage has escaped observation. The ‘piteous action’ of the ghost could not alter things already *effected*, but might move Hamlet to a less stern mood of mind.

²³ See p. 85, note 29, and *The Tempest*, vol. i. p. 64. This speech of the queen has the following remarkable variation in the quarto of 1603: —

‘Alas, it is the weakness of thy brain

Which makes thy tongue to blazon thy heart’s grief:

But as I have a soul, I swear to heaven,

I never knew of this most horrid murder:

But, Hamlet, this is only fantasy,

And for my love forget these idle fits.’

Ham. Ecstasy!

My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time,
And makes as healthful music: It is not madness,
That I have utter'd: bring me to the test,
And I the matter will reword; which madness
Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace,
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,
That not your trespass, but my madness, speaks:
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place;
Whilst rank corruption, mining all within,
Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven;
Repent what's past; avoid what is to come;
And do not spread the compost²⁴ on the weeds,
To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue:
For in the fatness of these pursy times,
Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg:
Yea, curb²⁵ and woo, for leave to do him good.

Queen. O, Hamlet! thou hast cleft my heart in twain.

Ham. O, throw away the worser part of it,
And live the purer with the other half.
Good night: but go not to my uncle's bed;
Assume a virtue, if you have it not.
[That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat
Of habit's devil, is angel yet in this²⁶;
That to the use of actions fair and good
He likewise gives a frock, or livery,

24 'Do not by any new indulgence heighten your former offences.'

25 i. e. *bow*. 'Courber, Fr., to bow, crook, or curb.' Thus in *Pierce Plowman*: —

'Then I *courbid* on my knees.'

26 'That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat
Of habit's devil, is angel yet in this,' &c.

This passage, which is not in the folio, has been thought corrupt. Dr. Thirlby proposed to read, 'Of habits *evil*.' Steevens would read, 'Or habits' devil.' It is evident that there is an intended opposition between *angel* and *devil*; but the passage will perhaps bear explaining as it stands: — 'That monster custom, who devours all sense (feeling, or perception) of *devilish habits*, is angel yet in this,' &c. 'This passage might perhaps have been as well omitted after the example of the editors of the folio; but, I presume, it has been retained upon the principle which every where guide the editors, 'To lose no drop of that immortal man.'

That aptly is put on:] Refrain to-night²⁷;
 And that shall lend a kind of easiness
 To the next abstinence: [²⁸the next more easy:
 For use almost can change the stamp of nature,
 And either quell the devil or throw him out
 With wondrous potency.] Once more, good night!
 And when you are desirous to be bless'd,
 I'll blessing beg of you. — For this same lord,
 [Pointing to POLONIUS.]

I do repent: But heaven hath pleas'd it so, —
 To punish me with this, and this with me²⁹,
 That I must be their scourge and minister.
 I will bestow him, and will answer well
 The death I gave him. So, again, good night! —
 I must be cruel, only to be kind:
 Thus bad begins, and worse remains behind. —
 But one word more, good lady.

Queen. What shall I do?

Ham. Not this, by no means, that I bid you do:
 Let the bloat king tempt you again to bed;
 Pinch wanton on your cheek; call you his mouse³⁰;
 And let him, for a pair of reechy³¹ kisses,
 Or paddling in your neck with his damn'd fingers,
 Make you to ravel all this matter out,

27 Here the quarto of 1603 has two remarkable lines: —

'And, mother, but assist me in revenge,
 And in his death your infamy shall die.'

28 [The next more easy, &c.] This passage, as far as *potency*, is also omitted in the folio. In the line: —

'And either quell the devil, or throw him out.'

The word QUELL is wanting in the old copy. Malone inserted the word *curb*, because he found, in *The Merchant of Venice*, 'And curb this cruel devil of his will.' But the occurrence of *curb* in so opposite a sense just before is against his emendation.

29 'To punish me by making me the instrument of this man's death, and to punish this man by my hand.'

30 *Mouse*, a term of endearment formerly. Thus Burton, in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*: — 'Pleasant names may be invented, bird, mouse, lamb, puss, pigeon,' &c.

31 i. e. *reeky* or fumant; reekant, as Florio calls it. The king has been already called the *bloat* king, which hints at his intemperance. In *Coriolanus* we have the *reechy* neck of a kitchen wench. *Reeky* and *reechy* are the same word, and always applied to any vaporous exhalation, even to the fumes of a dunghill.

That I essentially am not in madness,
 But mad in craft³². 'Twere good, you let him know;
 For who, that's but a queen, fair, sober, wise,
 Would from a paddock, from a bat, a gib³³,
 Such dear concernings hide? who would do so?
 No, in despite of sense, and secrecy,
 Unpeg the basket on the house's top,
 Let the birds fly; and, like the famous ape,
 To try conclusions³⁴, in the basket creep,
 And break your own neck down.

Queen. Be thou assur'd, if words be made of breath,
 And breath of life, I have no life to breathe
 What thou hast said to me³⁵.

Ham. I must to England³⁶; you know that?

Queen. Alack,
 I had forgot; 'tis so concluded on.

Ham. [There's letters seal'd: and my two school-
 fellows³⁷, —

Whom I will trust, as I will adders fang'd, —
 They bear the mandate; they must sweep my way,
 And marshal me to knavery: Let it work;
 For 'tis the sport, to have the engineer
 Hoist with his own petar³⁸: and it shall go hard.

32 The hint for Hamlet's feigned madness is taken from the old *Historie of Hamblett* already mentioned.

33 For *paddock*, a *toad*, see *Macbeth*, Act i. Sc. 1: and for *gib*, a *cat*, see *King Henry IV.* Part i. Act i. Sc. 2.

34 *To try conclusions* is to put to proof, or try experiments. See *Merchant of Venice*, Act ii. Sc. 2. Sir John Suckling possibly alludes to the same story in one of his letters: — It is the story after all of the jackanapes and the partridges; thou starest after a beauty till it be lost to thee, and then let'st out another, and starest after that till it is gone too.'

35 The quarto of 1603 has here another remarkable variation: —

'Hamlet, I vow by that Majesty
 That knows our thoughts and looks into our hearts,
 I will conceal, consent, and do my best,
 What stratagem soe'er thou shalt devise.'

36 The manner in which Hamlet came to know that he was to be sent to England is not developed. He expresses surprise when the king mentions it in a future scene; but his design of passing for a madman may account for this.

37 This and the eight following verses are omitted in the folio.

38 *Hoist* with his own *petar*. *Hoist* for *hoised*. *To hoyse* was the old verb. A *petar* was a kind of mortar used to blow up gates.

But I will delve one yard below their mines,
 And blow them at the moon: O, 'tis most sweet,
 When in one line two crafts directly meet. —]
 This man shall set me packing.
 I'll lug the guts into the neighbour room³⁹: —
 Mother, good night. — Indeed, this counsellor
 Is now most still, most secret, and most grave,
 Who was in life a foolish prating knave.
 Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you: —
 Good night, mother.

[*Exeunt severally; HAMLET dragging in*
 POLONIUS.

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *The same.*

Enter King, Queen, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

King. There's matter in these sighs; these profound
 heaves:

You must translate: 'tis fit we understand them:
 Where is your son?

Queen. Bestow this place on us a little while¹, —
 [To ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN, who
 go out.

³⁹ It must be confessed that this is coarse language for a prince under any circumstances, and such as is not called for by the occasion. But Hamlet has purposely chosen gross expressions and coarse metaphors throughout the interview with his mother, perhaps to make his appeal to her feelings the more forcible. Something may be said in extenuation. The word *guts* was not anciently so offensive to delicacy as it is at present; the courtly Lyly has used it in his *Mydas*, 1592. Stanyhurst often in his translation of Virgil, and Chapman in his version of the sixth *Iliad*: —

‘—— in whose *guts* the king of men imprest
 His ashen lance.’

In short, *guts* was used where we now use *entrails*.

¹ This line does not appear in the folio, in which Guildenstern and Rosencrantz are not brought on the stage at all.

Ah², my good lord, what have I seen to-night!

King. What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?

Queen. Mad as the sea, and wind, when both contend³

Which is the mightier: In his lawless fit,
Behind the arras hearing something stir,
Whips out his rapier, cries, *A rat! a rat!*
And, in this brainish apprehension, kills
The unseen good old man.

King. O heavy deed!

It had been so with us, had we been there:
His liberty is full of threats to all;
To you yourself, to us, to every one.
Alas! how shall this bloody deed be answer'd?
It will be laid to us, whose providence
Should have kept short, restrain'd, and out of haunt⁴,
This mad young man: but, so much was our love,
We would not understand what was most fit;
But, like the owner of a foul disease,
To keep it from divulging, let it feed
Even on the pith of life. Where is he gone?

Queen. To draw apart the body he hath kill'd:
O'er whom his very madness, like some ore,
Among a mineral⁵ of metals base,
Shows itself pure; he weeps for what is done.

² Quarto — Ah, *mine own* lord.

³ Thus in *Lear*: —

‘———— he was met e'en now
As mad as the vex'd sea.’

⁴ Out of *haunt* means out of company. ‘*Frequentia*, a great haunt or company of folk.’ Thus in *Antony and Cleopatra*: —

‘Dido and her Sichaeus shall want troops,
And all the *haunt* be ours.’

And in *Romeo and Juliet*: —

‘We talk here in the public *haunt* of men.’

⁵ Shakspeare with a licence not unusual among his cotemporaries, uses *ore* for *gold*, and *mineral* for *mine*. Bullokar and Blount both define ‘*or* or *ore*, gold; of a golden colour.’ And the Cambridge Dictionary, 1594, under the Latin word *mineralia*, will show the English *mineral* came to be used for a mine. Thus also in *The Golden Remaines of Hales of Eton*, 1693: — ‘Controversies of the times, like spirits in the *minerals*, with all their labour nothing is done.’

King. O, Gertrude, come away!
The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch,
But we will ship him hence: and this vile deed
We must, with all our majesty and skill,
Both countenance and excuse. — Ho! Guildenstern!

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Friends both, go join you with some further aid:
Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,
And from his mother's closet hath he dragg'd him:
Go, seek him out: speak fair, and bring the body
Into the chapel. I pray you, haste in this.

[Exeunt Ros. and GUIL.]

Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends;
And let them know, both what we mean to do,
And what's untimely done, [so, haply, slander, —
Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter,
As level as the cannon to his blank⁶,
Transports his poison'd shot, may miss our name,
And hit the woundless air⁷.] O, come away!
My soul is full of discord, and dismay. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE II. *Another Room in the same.*

Enter HAMLET.

Ham. — — Safely stowed, — *[Ros. &c. within.*
Hamlet! Lord Hamlet!] But soft¹, — what noise? who
calls on Hamlet? O, here they come.

⁶ The *blank* was the mark at which shots or arrows were directed. Thus in *The Winter's Tale*, Act ii. Sc. 3: —

'Out of the *blank* and level of my aim.'

⁷ The passage in brackets is not in the folio. The words 'So haply slander' are also omitted in the quartos; they were supplied by Theobald. The addition is supported by a passage in *Cymbeline*: —

'———— No, 'tis slander,

Whose edge is sharper than the sword, whose tongue
Out-venoms all the worms of Nile, whose breath
Rides on the posting winds, and doth bely
All corners of the world.'

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Ros. What have you done, my lord, with the dead body?

Ham. Compounded it with dust, whereto 'tis kin.

Ros. Tell us where 'tis; that we may take it thence, And bear it to the chapel.

Ham. Do not believe it.

Ros. Believe what?

Ham. That I can keep your counsel, and not mine own. Besides, to be demanded of a sponge! — what replication should be made by the son of a king?

Ros. Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

Ham. Ay, sir; that soaks up the king's countenance, his rewards, his authorities². But such officers do the king best service in the end: He keeps them, like an ape doth nuts³, in the corner of his jaw; first mouth-ed, to be last swallowed: When he needs what you have gleaned, it is but squeezing you, and, sponge, you shall be dry again⁴.

Ros. I understand you not, my lord.

Ham. I am glad of it: A knavish speech sleeps in a foolish ear.

Ros. My lord, you must tell us where the body is, and go with us to the king.

Ham. The body is with the king, but the king is not with the body⁵. The king is a thing — —

1 'But soft,' these two words are not in the folio.

2 Here the quarto 1603 inserts 'that makes his liberality your storehouse, but,' &c.

3 The omission of the words '*doth nuts*.' in the old copies, had obscured this passage. Dr. Farmer proposed to read 'like an ape an apple.' The words are now supplied from the newly discovered quarto of 1603.

4 He's but a *spunge*, and shortly needs must leese,
His wrong got juice, when greatness' fist shall *squeese*
His liquor out. Marston, Sat. vii.

5 Hamlet affects obscurity. His meaning may be 'The king is a *body* without a *kingly* soul, a thing — of nothing.' Johnson would have altered '*Of nothing*' to *Or nothing*; but Steevens and Farmer, by their superior acquaintance with our elder writers, soon clearly showed, by several examples, that the text was right.

Guil. A thing, my lord?

Ham. Of nothing: bring me to him. Hide fox, and all after⁶. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE III. *Another Room in the same.*

Enter King, attended.

King. I have sent to seek him, and to find the body. How dangerous is it, that this man goes loose! Yet must not we put the strong law on him: He's lov'd of the distracted multitude, Who like not in their judgment, but their eyes; And, where 'tis so, the offender's scourge is weigh'd, But never the offence. To bear all smooth and even, This sudden sending him away must seem Deliberate pause: Diseases, desperate grown, By desperate appliance are relieved.

Enter ROSENCRANTZ.

Or not all. — How now? what hath befallen?

Ros. Where the dead body is bestow'd, my lord, We cannot get from him.

King. But where is he?

Ros. Without, my lord; guarded, to know your pleasure.

King. Bring him before us.

Ros. Ho, Guildenstern! bring in my lord.

Enter HAMLET and GUILDENSTERN.

King. Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

Ham. At supper.

King. At supper? Where?

Ham. Not where he eats, but where he is eaten: a

⁶ 'Hide fox, and all after.' This was a juvenile sport, most probably what is now called *hoop*, or *hide and seek*, in which one child hides himself, and the rest run *all after*, seeking him. The words are not in the quarto.

certain convocation of politic worms are e'en at him. Your worm is your only emperor for diet: we fat all creatures else, to fat us; and we fat ourselves for maggots: Your fat king, and your lean beggar, is but variable service; two dishes, but to one table; that's the end.

[*King*. Alas, alas!

Ham. A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king; and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm ¹.]

King. What dost thou mean by this?

Ham. Nothing, but to show you how a king may go a progress ² through the guts of a beggar.

King. Where is Polonius?

Ham. In heaven; send thither to see: if your messenger find him not there, seek him i'the other place yourself. But, indeed, if you find him not within this month, you shall nose him as you go up the stairs into the lobby.

King. Go seek him there. [To some Attendants.

Ham. He will stay till you come.

[*Exeunt* Attendants.

King. Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety,
Which we do tender, as we dearly grieve
For that which thou hast done, — must send thee
hence

With fiery quickness: Therefore prepare thyself;
The bark is ready, and the wind at help ³,

¹ Alas, Alas! This speech, and the following one of Hamlet, are omitted in the folio.

² A *progress* is a *journey*. Steevens says 'it alludes to the royal journies of state, always styled progresses.' This was probably in Shakspeare's mind, for the word was certainly applied to those periodical journeys of the sovereign to visit their noble subjects, but by no means exclusively. Sir William Drury, in a Letter to Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, among the Conway papers, tells him he is going 'a little *progresse* to be merry with his neighbours.' And that popular book of John Bunyan's, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, is surely not the account of a regal 'predatory excursion.'

³ i. e. in modern phrase 'the wind *serves*,' or is right to *aid* or *help* you on your way.

The associates tend⁴, and every thing is bent
For England.

Ham. For England?

King. Ay, Hamlet.

Ham. Good.

King. So is it, if thou knew'st our purposes.

Ham. I see a cherub, that sees them. — But, come;
for England! — Farewell, dear mother.

King. Thy loving father, Hamlet.

Ham. My mother: Father and mother is man and
wife; man and wife is one flesh; and so, my mother.
Come, for England. [Exit.

King. Follow him at foot; tempt him with speed
aboard;

Delay it not, I'll have him hence to-night:
Away; for every thing is seal'd and done
That else leans on the affair; 'Pray you, make haste.
[Exeunt Ros. and GUIL.

And, England, if my love thou hold'st at aught,
(As my great power thereof may give thee sense;
Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red
After the Danish sword, and thy free awe
Pays homage to us,) thou may'st not coldly set⁵
Our sovereign process; which imports at full,
By letters conjuring to that effect,
The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England;
For like the hectick in my blood he rages⁶,
And thou must cure me: Till I know 'tis done,
Howe'er my haps, my joys will ne'er begin⁷. [Exit.

4 i. e. attend.

5 To set formerly meant to *estimate*. There is no ellipsis, as Malone supposed. 'To sette, or tell the pryce; *aestimare*.' To set much or little by a thing; is to *estimate* it much or little.

6 'I would forget her, but a fever she
Reigns in my blood.' *Love's Labour's Lost*.

7 The folio reads: —
'Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun.'

SCENE IV. *A Plain in Denmark.**Enter FORTINBRAS, and Forces, marching.*

For. Go, captain, from me greet the Danish king;
 Tell him, that, by his licence, Fortinbras
 Claims¹ the conveyance of a promis'd march
 Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.
 If that his majesty would aught with us,
 We shall express our duty in his eye²,
 And let him know so.

Cap. I will do't, my lord.

For. Go softly on.

[Exeunt FORTINBRAS and Forces.]

Enter HAMLET, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, &c.

[³*Ham.* Good sir, whose powers are these?

Cap. They are of Norway, sir.

Ham. How purpos'd, sir,
 I pray you?

Cap. Against some part of Poland.

Ham. Who
 Commands them, sir?

Cap. The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.

Ham. Goes it against the main of Poland, sir,
 Or for some frontier?

Cap. Truly to speak, sir, and with no addition,
 We go to gain a little patch of ground,
 That hath in it no profit but the name.
 To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it;
 Nor will it yield to Norway, or the Pole,
 A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee.

¹ The quarto reads — *craves*.

² *Eye* for *presence*. In the Regulations for the establishment of the Queen's Household, 1627: — 'All such as doe service in the queen's eye.' And in The Establishment of Prince Henry's Household, 1610: — 'All such as doe service in the prince's eye.' It was the formulary for the royal *presence*.

³ The remainder of this scene is omitted in the folio.

Ham. Why, then the Polack never will defend it.

Cap. Yes, 'tis already garrison'd.

Ham. Two thousand souls, and twenty thousand ducats,

Will not debate the question of this straw:

This is the imposthume of much wealth and peace;

That inward breaks, and shows no cause without

Why the man dies. — I humbly thank you, sir.

Cap. God be wi' you, sir. [Exit Captain.

Ros. Will't please you go, my lord?

Ham. I will be with you straight. Go a little before.

[Exeunt *Ros.* and *GUIL.*

How all occasions do inform against me,

And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,

If his chief good, and market⁴ of his time,

Be but to sleep, and feed? a beast, no more.

Sure, he, that made us with such large discourse⁵,

Looking before, and after, gave us not

That capability and godlike reason

To fust in us unus'd. Now, whether it be

Bestial oblivion, or some craven⁶ scruple

Of thinking too precisely on the event, —

A thought, which, quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom,

And, ever, three parts coward, — I do not know

Why yet I live to say, *This thing's to do*:

Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means,

To do't. Examples, gross as earth, exhort me:

Witness, this army of such mass, and charge,

⁴ i. e. profit.

⁵ See note on Act i. Sc. 2, p. 23. It is evident that discursive powers of mind are meant; or, as Johnson explains it, 'such latitude of comprehension, such power of reviewing the past, and anticipating the future.' Since I wrote the former note, I find that Bishop Wilkins makes *ratiocination* and *discourse* convertible terms.

⁶ *Craven* is recreant, cowardly. It may be satisfactorily traced from *crant*, *creant*, the old French word for an act of submission. It is so written in the old metrical romance of Ywaine and Gawaine (Ritson, vol. i. p. 133): —

'Or yelde the til us als *creant*,'

And in Richard Coeur de Lion (Weber, vol. ii. p. 208): —

'On knees he fel down, and cryde, "*Créaunt*."

It then became *cravant*, *cravent*, and at length *craven*. It is superfluous to add that *recreant* is from the same source.

Led by a delicate and tender prince;
 Whose spirit, with divine ambition puff'd,
 Makes mouths at the invisible event;
 Exposing what is mortal, and unsure,
 To all that fortune, death, and danger, dare,
 Even for an egg-shell. Rightly to be great,
 Is, not to stir without great argument;
 But greatly to find quarrel in a straw,
 When honour's at the stake. How stand I then,
 That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,
 Excitements of my reason, and my blood⁷,
 And let all sleep? while, to my shame, I see
 The imminent death of twenty thousand men,
 That, for a fantasy, and trick of fame,
 Go to their graves like beds: fight for a plot⁸
 Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
 Which is not tomb enough, and continent⁹,
 To hide the slain? — O, from this time forth,
 My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth! [*Exit.*]

SCENE V. Elsinore. *A Room in the Castle.*

Enter Queen and HORATIO.

Queen. — — I will not speak with her.

Hor. She is importunate; indeed, distract;
 Her mood will needs be pitied.

Queen.

What would she have?

⁷ 'Excitements of my reason and my blood.'

Provocations which excite both my reason and my passions to vengeance.

⁸ A *plot* of ground. Thus in *The Mirror for Magistrates*: —

'Of ground to win a *plot*, a while to dwell,
 We venture lives, and send our souls to hell.'

⁹ *Continent* means that which comprehends or encloses. Thus in *Lear*: —

'Rive your concealing *continents*.'

And in Chapman's version of the third *Iliad*: —

'——— did take

Thy fair form for a *continent* of parts as fair.'

'If there be no fulnesse' then is the *continent* greater than the content. — *Bacon's Advancement of Learning*, 1633, p. 7.

Hor. She speaks much of her father; says, she hears,
There's tricks i'the world; and hems, and beats her
heart;

Spurns enviously¹ at straws; speaks things in doubt,
That carry but half sense: her speech is nothing,
Yet the unshaped use of it doth move
The hearers to collection²; they aim³ at it,
And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts;
Which, as her winks, and nods, and gestures yield them,
Indeed would make one think, there might⁴ be thought,
Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily⁵.

Queen. 'Twere good, she were spoken with; for she
may strew
Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds:
Let her come in⁶. [*Exit* HORATIO.
To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,
Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss⁷:
So full of artless jealousy is guilt,
It spills itself, in fearing to be spilt.

Re-enter HORATIO, with OPHELIA⁸.

Oph. Where is the Beauteous majesty of Denmark?

¹ *Envy* is often used by Shakspeare and his contemporaries for malice, spite, or hatred: —

'You turn the good we offer into envy.'

King Henry VIII.

See Merchant of Venice, Act iv. Sc. 1. Indeed 'enviously, and spitefully,' are treated as synonymous by our old writers.

² To collection, that is to gather or deduce consequences from such premises. Thus in Cymbeline, Act v. Sc. 5: —

'———— whose containing
Is so from sense to hardness, that I can
Make no collection of it.'

See note on that passage.

³ The quartos read — *yawn*. To aim is to guess.

⁴ Folio — *would*.

⁵ *Unhappily*, that is *mischievously*.

⁶ The three first lines of this speech are given to Horatio in the quarto.

⁷ Shakspeare is not singular in his use of *amiss* as a substantive. Several instances are adduced by Steevens, and more by Mr. Nares in his Glossary. 'Each toy' is each trifle.

⁸ 'There is no part of this play in its representation on the stage more pathetic than this scene; which, I suppose, proceeds

Queen. How now, Ophelia?

Oph. How should I your true love know,
From another one?

By his cockle hat and staff,

And his sandal shoon⁹.

[Singing.

Queen. Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?

Oph. Say you, nay; pray you, mark.

He is dead and gone, lady,

[Sings.

He is dead and gone;

At his head a grass-green turf,

At his heels a stone.

O, ho!

Queen. Nay, but Ophelia, — —

Oph. Pray you, mark.

White his shroud as the mountain snow.

[Sings.

Enter King.

Queen. Alas, look here, my lord.

Oph. Larded¹⁰ all with sweet flowers;

Which bewept to the grave¹¹ did go,

With true love-showers.

King. How do you, pretty lady?

Oph. Well, God'ield¹² you! They say, the owl was
a baker's daughter¹³. Lord, we know what we are,
but know not what we may be. God be at your table!

from the utter insensibility Ophelia has to her own misfortunes. A great sensibility, or none at all, seem to produce the same effects. In the latter [case] the audience supply what is wanting, and with the former they sympathize.' — Sir J. Reynolds.

9 These were the badges of pilgrims. The *cockle shell* was an emblem of their intention to go beyond sea. The habit being held sacred, was often assumed as a disguise in love adventures. In *The Old Wive's Tale*, by Peele, 1595: — 'I will give thee a palmer's staff of ivory, and a scallop shell of beaten gold.'

10 Garnished.

11 Quarto — ground.

12 See *Macbeth*, Act i. Sc. 6.

13 This (says Mr. Douce) is a common tradition in Gloucestershire, and is thus related: — 'Our Saviour went into a baker's shop where they were baking, and asked for some bread to eat. The mistress of the shop immediately put a piece of dough in the oven to bake for him; but was reprimanded by her daughter, who

King. Conceit upon her father.

Oph. Pray, let us have no words of this; but when they ask you, what it means, say you this:

*Good morrow, 'tis Saint Valentine's day*¹⁴,
All in the morning betime,
And I a maid at your window
To be your Valentine:

Then up he rose, and don'd his clothes,
*And dupp'd*¹⁵ *the chamber door;*
Let in the maid, that out a maid
Never departed more.

King. Pretty Ophelia!

Oph. Indeed, without an oath, I'll make an end on't:

*By Gis, and by Saint Charity*¹⁶,
Alack, and fye for shame!

insisting that the piece of dough was too large, reduced it to a very small size. The dough, however, immediately began to swell, and presently became of a most enormous size. Where-upon the baker's daughter cried out Heugh, heugh, heugh, which owl-like noise probably induced our Saviour to transform her into that bird for her wickedness.' The story is related to deter children from illiberal behaviour to the poor.

14 The old copies read: —

'To-morrow 'tis Saint Valentine's day.'

The emendation was made by Dr. Farmer. The origin of the choosing of Valentines has not been clearly developed. Mr. Douce traces it to a Pagan custom of the same kind during the Lupercalia feasts in honour of Pan and Juno, celebrated in the month of February by the Romans. The anniversary of the good bishop, or Saint Valentine, happening in this month, the pious early promoters of christianity placed this popular custom under the patronage of the saint, in order to eradicate the notion of its pagan origin. In France the *Valentin* was a moveable feast, celebrated on the first Sunday in Lent, which was called the *jour des brandons*, because the boys carried about lighted torches on that day. It is very probable that the saint has nothing to do with the custom, his legend gives no clue to any such supposition. The popular notion that the birds choose their mates about this period has its rise in the poetical world of fiction.

15 To *dup* is to *do up*, as to *don* is to *do on*, to *doff* to *do off*, &c. Thus in *Damon and Pythias*, 1582: — 'The porters are drunk, will they not *dup* the gate to day? The phrase probably had its origin from *doing up* or lifting the latch. In the old cant language to *dup* the *gyger* was to open the door. See Harman's *Caveat for Cursetors*, 1575.

16 *Saint Charity* is found in the *Martyrology* on the first of August. 'Romae passio sanctarum virginum Fidei, Spei, et Charitas,

*Young men will do't, if they come to't;
By cock, they are to blame.*

*Quoth she, before you tumbled me,
You promised me to wed:*

[He answers.]

*So would I ha' done, by yonder sun,
An thou hadst not come to my bed.*

King. How long hath she been thus?

Oph. I hope, all will be well. We must be patient: but I cannot choose but weep, to think, they should lay him i'the cold ground: My brother shall know of it, and so I thank you for your good counsel. Come, my coach! Good night, ladies; good night, sweet ladies: good night, good night. [Exit.

King. Follow her close! give her good watch, I pray you. [Exit HORATIO.

O! this is the poison of deep grief; it springs
All from her father's death: and now behold,
O Gertrude, Gertrude¹⁷,
When sorrows come, they come not single spies,
But in battalions! First, her father slain;
Next, your son gone; and he most violent author
Of his own just remove: The people muddied,
Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts and whispers,
For good Polonius' death; and we have done but
greenly¹⁸,
In hugger-mugger¹⁹ to inter him: Poor Ophelia

quae sub Hadriano principe martyriae coronam adeptae sunt.' Spenser mentions her in Eclog. v. 225. *By gis* and *by cock* are only corruptions, or rather substitutions, for different forms of imprecation by the sacred name.

17 In the quarto 1603 the King says: —

'Ah pretty wretch! this is a change indeed:
O time, how swiftly runs our joys away?
Content on earth was never certain bred,
To-day we laugh and live, to-morrow dead.'

18 *Greenly* is unskilfully, with inexperience.

19 i. e. *secretly*. 'Clandestinare, to hide or conceal by stealth, or in hugger mugger.' — Florio. Thus in North's translation of Plutarch: — 'Antonius, thinking that his body should be honourably buried, and not in hugger mugger.' Pope, offended at this strange phrase, changed it to *private*, and was followed by others. Upon

Divided from herself, and her fair judgment;
 Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts.
 Last, and as much containing as all these,
 Her brother is in secret come from France:
 Feeds on his wonder²⁰, keeps himself in clouds,
 And wants not buzzers to infect his ear
 With pestilent speeches of his father's death;
 Wherein necessity, of matter beggar'd,
 Will nothing stick our person to arraign
 In ear and ear. O my dear Gertrude, this,
 Like to a murdering piece²¹, in many places
 Gives me superfluous death! [A noise within.]

Queen. Alack! what noise is this²²?

Enter a Gentleman.

King. Attend.

Where are my Switzers²³? Let them guard the door:
 What is the matter?

Gent. Save yourself, my lord;
 The ocean, overpeering of his list,
 Eats not the flats with more impetuous haste,

which Johnson remarks: — 'If phraseology is to be changed as words grow uncouth by disuse, or gross by vulgarity, the history of every language will be lost: we shall no longer have the words of any author: and, as these alterations will be often unskilfully made, we shall in time have very little of his meaning.'

²⁰ The quarto reads — '*Keeps on his wonder.*' The folio — '*Feeds on this wonder.*'

²¹ A murdering-piece, or *murderer*, was a small piece of artillery; in French *meurtriére*. It took its name from the loopholes and embrasures in towers and fortifications, which were so called. The portholes in the forecastle of a ship were also thus denominated. '*Meurtriére, c'est un petit canonniére, comme celles des tours et murailles, ainsi appelé, parceque tirant par icelle a desceu, ceux ausquels on tire sont facilement meurtri.*' — Nicot. '*Visiere meurtriére, a port-hole for a murdering-piece in the forecastle of a ship.*' — Cotgrave. Case shot, filled with small bullets, nails, old iron, &c. was often used in these *murderers*. This accounts for the raking fire attributed to them in the text, and in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Double Marriage*: —

'—— like a *murdering-piece*, aims not at me.
 But all that stand within the dangerous level.'

²² The speech of the queen is omitted in the quartos.

²³ *Switzers*, for royal guards. The Swiss were then, as since, mercenary soldiers of any nation that could afford to pay them.

Than young Laertes, in a riotous head,
 O'erbears your officers! The rabble call him lord;
 And, as the world were now but to begin,
 Antiquity forgot, custom not known,
 The ratifiers and props of every word,
 They cry, *Choose we; Laertes shall be king!*²⁴
 Caps, hands, and tongues, applaud it to the clouds,
Laertes shall be king, Laertes king!

Queen. How cheerfully on the false trail they cry!
 O, this is counter²⁵, you false Danish dogs.

King. The doors are broke. [Noise within.]

Enter LAERTES, armed; Danes following.

Laer. Where is this king? — Sirs, stand you all without.

Dan. No, let's come in.

Laer. I pray you, give me leave.

Dan. We will, we will.

[*They retire without the door.*]

Laer. I thank you: — keep the door. — O thou vile king,

Give me my father.

Queen. Calmly, good Laertes.

Laer. That drop of blood, that's calm, proclaims me bastard;

Cries, cuckold, to my father; brands the harlot
 Even here, between the chaste unsmirched²⁶ brow
 Of my true mother.

King. What is the cause, Laertes,
 That thy rebellion looks so giant-like? —

²⁴ The meaning of this contested passage appears to me this: The rabble call him lord; and (as if the world were now but to begin, as if antiquity were forgot, and custom were unknown) this rabble, the ratifiers and props of every idle word, cry *Choose we.* &c.

²⁵ Hounds are said to run *counter* when they are upon a false scent, or hunt it by the heel, running backward and mistaking the course of the game. See *Comedy of Errors*, Act iv. Sc. 2.

²⁶ *Unsmirched* is unsullied, spotless. See Act i. Sc. 3, p. 28, note 4:

Let him go, Gertrude; do not fear our person;
 There's such divinity doth hedge²⁷ a king,
 That treason can but peep to what it would,
 Acts little of his will. — Tell me, Laertes,
 Why thou art thus incens'd; — Let him go, Gertrude; —
 Speak, man.

Laer. Where is my father?

King.

Dead.

Queen.

But not by him.

King. Let him demand his fill.

Laer. How came he dead? I'll not be juggled with:
 To hell, allegiance! vows, to the blackest devil!
 Conscience, and grace, to the profoundest pit!
 I dare damnation: To this point I stand, —
 That both the worlds I give to negligence²⁸,
 Let come what comes; only I'll be reveng'd
 Most thoroughly for my father.

King.

Who shall stay you?

Laer. My will, not all the world's:
 And, for my means, I'll husband them so well,
 They shall go far with little.

King.

Good Laertes,

If you desire to know the certainty
 Of your dear father's death, is't writ in your revenge,
 That, sweepstake, you will draw both friend and foe,
 Winner and loser?

Laer. None but his enemies.

King.

Will you know them then?

²⁷ Quarto 1603 — *wall.* Mr. Boswell has adduced the following anecdote of Queen Elizabeth as an apposite illustration of this passage: — 'While her majesty was on the Thames, near Greenwich, a shot was fired by accident, which struck the royal barge, and hurt a waterman near her. The French ambassador being amazed, and all crying Treason, Treason! yet she, with an undaunted spirit, came to the open place of the barge, and bade them never fear, for if the shot were made at her, they durst not shoot again: such majesty had her presence, and such boldness her heart, that she despised fear, and was, as all princes are, or should be, so full of *divine fullness*, that guiltie mortality durst not behold her but with dazzled eyes.' — *Henry Chettle's England's Mourning Garment.*

²⁸ 'But let the frame of things disjoint, *both the worlds* suffer.'
Macbeth.

Laer. To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms:

And like the kind life-rend'ring pelican,
Repast them with my blood ²⁹.

King. Why, now you speak
Like a good child; and a true gentleman.
That I am guiltless of your father's death,
And am most sensibly ³⁰ in grief for it,
It shall as level to your judgment pierce ³¹
As day does to your eye.

Danes [Within.] Let her come in.

Laer. How now! what noise is that?

*Enter OPHELIA, fantastically dressed with Straws
and Flowers.*

O heat, dry up my brains! tears, seven times salt,
Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye! —
By heaven, thy madness shall be paid with weight,
Till our scale turn the beam. O rose of May!
Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!
O heavens! is't possible, a young maid's wits
Should be as mortal as an old man's life?
Nature is fine ³² in love; and, where 'tis fine,

²⁹ The folio reads *politician* instead of *pelican*. This fabulous bird is not unfrequently made use of for purposes of poetical illustration by our elder poets: Shakspeare has again referred to it in *King Richard II.* and in *King Lear*: —

‘Twas this flesh begot these *pelican* daughters.’
In the old play of *King Leir*, 1605, it is also used, but in a different sense: —

‘I am as kind as is the *pelican*,
That kills itself to save her young ones’ lives.’

³⁰ Folio — sensible.

³¹ *Pierce* is the reading of the folio. The quarto has ‘*pear*’, an awkward contraction of *appear*. I do not see why *appear* is more intelligible. Indeed as *level* is here used for *direct*, Shakspeare’s usual meaning of the word, the reading of the quarto, preferred by Johnson and Steevens, is less proper.

³² ‘Nature is *fine* in love.’ The three concluding lines of this speech are not in the quarto. The meaning appears to be, Nature is refined or subtilised by love, the senses are rendered more ethereal, and being thus refined, some precious portions of the mental energies fly off, or are sent after the beloved object; when

It sends some precious instance of itself
After the thing it loves.

Oph. *They bore him barefac'd on the bier;*

Hey no nonny, nonny hey nonny:

And in his grave rain'd many a tear; —

Fare you well, my dove!

Laer. Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade re-
venge,

It could not move thus.

Oph. You must sing, *Down-a-down, an you call
him a-down-a.* O, how the wheel³³ becomes it! It
is the false steward, that stole his master's daughter.

Laer. This nothing's more than matter.

Oph. There's rosemary, that's for remembrance:

bereft of that object they are lost to us, and we are left in a state
of mental privation: —

'—— Even so by love the young and tender wit
Is turned to folly.'

'Love is a smoke, rais'd with the fume of sighs;
Being urg'd, a fire sparkling in lovers' eyes;
Being vex'd, a sea nourish'd with lovers' tears
What is it else? — a madness,' &c.

33 The *wheel* is the *burthen* of a ballad, from the Latin *rota*, a
round, which is usually accompanied with a *burthen* frequently
repeated. Thus also in old French, *roterie* signified such a *round*
or *catch*, and *rotuenge*, or *rotruhenge*, the *burthen* or *refrain* as it
is now called. Our old English term *refrette*, 'the foote of the
dittie, a verse often interlaced, or the burden of a song,' was pro-
bably from *refrain*; or from *refresteler*, to pipe over again. It is
used by Chaucer in *The Testament of Love*. This term was not
obsolete in Cotgrave's time, though it would now be as difficult
to adduce an instance of its use as of the *wheel*, at the same time
the quotation will show that the *down* of a ballad was another
term for the *burthen*. 'Refrain, the *refret*, *burthen*, or *downe* of a
ballad.' All this discussion is rendered necessary, because Stee-
vens unfortunately forgot to note from whence he made the follo-
wing extract, though he knew it was from the preface to some
black letter collection of songs or sonnets: — 'The song was ac-
counted a good one, though it was not moche graced with the
wheele, which in no wise accorded with the subject matter thereof.'
Thus also Nicholas Breton, in his *Toyes for Idle Head*, 1577: —

'That I may sing full merrily

Not heigh ho *wele*, but care away.'

It should be remembered that the old musical instrument called
a *rote*, from its *wheel*, was also termed *vielle*, quasi *wheel*. It
must surely have been out of a mere spirit of controversy that
Malone affected to think that the spinning-wheel was alluded to
by Ophelia.

pray you, love, remember: and there is pansies, that's for thoughts ³⁴.

Laer. A document in madness; thoughts and remembrance fitted.

Oph. There's fennel for you, and columbines: — there's rue for you; and here's some for me: — we may call it, herb of grace o'Sundays: — you may wear your rue with a difference. — There's a daisy: — I would give you some violets; but they withered all,

34 Our ancestors gave to almost every flower and plant its emblematic meaning, and like the ladies of the east, made them almost as expressive as written language, in their hieroglyphical sense. Perdita, in *The Winter's Tale*, distributes her flowers in the same manner as Ophelia, and some of them with the same meaning. In *The Handfull of Pleasant Delites*, 1584, recently reprinted in Mr. Park's *Heliconia*, we have a ballad called 'A Nosegaie alwaies sweet for Lovers to send for Tokens,' where we find: —

'Rosemarie is for remembrance
Betweene us day and night;
Wishing that I might alwaies have
You present in my sight.'

Rosemarie had this attribute because it was said to strengthen the memory, and was therefore used as a token of remembrance and affection between lovers, and was distributed as an emblem both at weddings and funerals. Why *pansies* (*pensées*) are emblems of thoughts is obvious. *Fennel* was emblematic of *flattery*, and '*Dare finocchio*, to give fennel,' was in other words 'to flatter, to dissemble,' according to Florio. Thus in the ballad above cited: —

'Fennel is for flatterers,
An evil thing 'tis sure.'

Browne, in his *Britannia's Pastorals*, says: —

'The columbine, in tawny often taken,
Is then ascribed to such as are forsaken.'

Rue was for *ruth* or *repentance*. It was also commonly called *herbgrace*, probably from being accounted 'a present remedy against all poison, and a potent auxiliary in exorcisms, all evil things fleeing from it.' By wearing it with a difference (an heraldic term for a mark of distinction) Ophelia may mean that the queen should wear it as a *mark of repentance*; herself as a *token of grief*. The *daisy* was emblematic of a *dissembler*: — 'Next, then grew the *dissembling daisy*, to warne such light of love wenches not to trust every fair promise that such amorous batchelors make.' — *Green's Quip for an Upstart Courtier*. The *violet* is for *faithfulness*, and is thus characterised in *The Lover's Nosegaie*: In Bion's beautiful elegy on the death of Adonis, Mr. Todd has pointed out: —

'—— πάντα σὺν αὐτῷ
Ὡς τῆνος τέθναξε, καὶ ἄνθεα πάντ' ἐμαράνθη.'

when my father died: — They say, he made a good end, — —

For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy, —

[Sings.

Laer. Thought³⁵ and affliction, passion, hell itself,
She turns to favour, and to prettiness.

Oph. *And will he not come again?*

[Sings.

And will he not come again?

No, no, he is dead,

Go to thy death-bed,

He never will come again.

His beard was as white as snow,

All flaxen was his poll:

He is gone, he is gone,

And we cast away moan;

God 'a mercy on his soul³⁶!

And of all christian souls! I pray God. God be wi' you!
[Exit OPHELIA.

Laer. Do you see this, O God?

King. Laertes, I must commune³⁷ with your grief,
Or you deny me right. Go but apart,
Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will,
And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me:

³⁵ *Thought*, among our ancestors, was used for *grief, care, pensiveness*. 'Curarum volvere in pectore. He will die for sorrow and thought.' — *Baret*. Thus in *Antony and Cleopatra*: —

'*Cleo.* What shall we do, Enobarbus?

'*Eno.*

Think and die.'

See note on that passage, vol. viii. p. 439, note 1.

³⁶ Poor Ophelia in her madness remembers the ends of many old popular ballads. 'Bonny Robin' appears to have been a favourite, for there were many others written to that tune. The editors have not traced the present one. It is introduced in *Eastward Hoe*, written by Jonson, Chapman, and Marston, where some parts of this play are apparently burlesqued. Hamlet is the name given to a foolish footman in the same scene. I know not why it should be considered an attack on Shakspeare; it was the usual licence of comedy to sport with every thing serious and even sacred. Hamlet Travestie may as well be called an invidious attack on Shakspeare.

³⁷ The folio reads *common*, which is only a varied orthography of the same word. 'We wtl devise and *common* of these matters.' — *Baret*.

If by direct or by collateral hand
 They find us touch'd, we will our kingdom give,
 Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours,
 To you in satisfaction; but, if not,
 Be you content to lend your patience to us,
 And we shall jointly labour with your soul
 To give it due content³⁸.

Laer. Let this be so;
 His means of death, his obscure funeral³⁹, —
 No trophy, sword, nor hatchment, o'er his bones,
 No noble rite, nor formal ostentation⁴⁰, —
 Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth,
 That I must call't in question.

King. So you shall;
 And, where the offence is, let the great axe fall.
 I pray you, go with me. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE VI. *Another Room in the same.*

Enter HORATIO, and a Servant.

Hor. What are they that would speak with me?

Serv. Sailors¹, sir;
 They say, they have letters for you.

³⁸ Thus in the quarto 1603: —

'*King.* Content you, good Leartes, for a time,
 Although I know your grief is a flood,
 Brim full of sorrow, but forbear a while,
 And think already the revenge is done
 On him that makes you such a hapless son.

'*Lear.* You have prevail'd, my lord, a while I'll strive
 To bury grief within a tomb of wrath,
 Which once unheard, then the world shall hear
 Leartes had a father he held dear.

'*King.* No more of that, ere many days be done
 You shall hear that you do not dream upon.'

³⁹ Folio — *burial*.

⁴⁰ The funerals of knights and persons of rank were made with great ceremony and ostentation formerly, Sir John Hawkins (himself of the order) observes that 'the sword, the helmet, the gauntlet, spurs, and tabard are still hung over the grave of every knight.'

¹ Quarto — *sea-faring men*.

Hor.

Let them come in. —

[*Exit* Servant.]

I do not know from what part of the world
I should be greeted, if not from Lord Hamlet.

Enter Sailors.

1 *Sail.* God bless you, sir.

Hor. Let him bless thee too.

1 *Sail.* He shall, sir, an't please him. There's a letter for you, sir: it comes² from the ambassador that was bound for England; if your name be Horatio, as I am let to know it is.

Hor. [*Reads.*] Horatio, *when thou shalt have overlooked this, give these fellows some means to the king; they have letters for him. Ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us chase: Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put on a compelled valour; and in the grapple I boarded them: on the instant, they got clear of our ship; so I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me, like thieves of mercy; but they knew what they did; I am to do a good turn for them. Let the king have the letters I have sent; and repair thou to me with as much haste as thou would'st fly death. I have words to speak in thine³ ear, will make thee dumb; yet are they much too light for the bore⁴ of the matter. These good fellows will bring thee where I am. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England: of them I have much to tell thee. Farewell.*

He that thou knowest thine, Hamlet.

Come, I will give you way for these your letters;
And do't the speedier, that you may direct me
To him from whom you brought them. [*Exeunt.*]

2 Folio — *it came.*

3 Folio — *your.*

4 The *bore* is the caliber of a gun. The matter (says Hamlet) would carry heavier words.

SCENE VII. *Another Room in the same.**Enter King and LAERTES.*

King. Now must your conscience my acquittance seal,
And you must put me in your heart for friend;
Sith you have heard, and with a knowing ear,
That he, which hath your noble father slain,
Pursu'd my life.

Laer. It well appears; — But tell me,
Why you proceeded not against these feats,
So crimeful¹ and so capital in nature,
As by your safety, greatness, wisdom, all things else,
You mainly were stirr'd up.

King. O, for two special reasons;
Which may to you, perhaps, seem much unsinew'd,
But yet to me they are strong. The queen, his
mother,
Lives almost by his looks; and for myself,
(My virtue, or my plague, be it either which,)
She is so conjunctive to my life and soul,
That, as the star moves not but in his sphere,
I could not but by her. The other motive,
Why to a public count I might not go,
Is, the great love the general gender² bear him:
Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,
Would, like the spring that turneth wood to stone,
Convert his gyves to graces³; so that my arrows,
Too slightly timber'd for so loud a wind⁴,
Would have reverted to my bow again,
And not where I had aim'd them.

¹ Quarto — *Criminal*. *Greatness* is omitted in the folio.

² i. e. the 'common race of the people.' We have the *general* and the *million* in other places in the same sense.

³ 'Would, like the spring which turneth wood to stone, convert his *fetters* into graces:' punishment would only give him more grace in their opinion. The quarto reads *work* for *would*.

⁴ '——— my arrows

Too slightly timber'd for so loud a wind.'

'*Lighte shaftes cannot stand in a rough wind.*' — *Ascham's Toxophilus*, 1589, p. 57.

Laer. And so have I a noble father lost;
A sister driven into desperate terms;
Whose worth, if praises may go back again⁵,
Stood challenger on mount of all the age
For her perfections: — But my revenge will come.

King. Break not your sleeps for that: you must not
think,
That we are made of stuff so flat and dull,
That we can let our beard be shook with danger⁶,
And think it pastime. You shortly shall hear more:
I loved your father, and we love ourself;
And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine, —
How now⁷? what news?

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. Letters, my lord, from Hamlet:
This to your majesty; this to the queen.

King. From Hamlet! Who brought them?

Mess. Sailors, my lord, they say: I saw them not;
They were given me by Claudio, he received them
Of him that brought them⁸.

King. Laertes, you shall hear them: —
Leave us. *[Exit Messenger.]*

[Reads.] *High and mighty, you shall know, I am
set naked on your kingdom. To-morrow shall I beg
leave to see your kingly eyes: when I shall, first
asking your pardon thereunto, recount the occasion
of my sudden and more strange return. Hamlet.*

What should this mean! Are all the rest come back?
Or is it some abuse, and no such thing?

Laer. Know you the hand?

⁵ 'If praises may go back again.' 'If I may praise what has been, but is now to be found no more.'

⁶ 'Idcirco stolidam praebet tibi vellere barbam
'Jupiter?' *Persius, Sat. ii.*

⁷ *How now* is omitted in the quarto: as is *letters* in the next speech.

⁸ This hemistich is not in the folio.

King. 'Tis Hamlet's character. *Naked*, —
And, in a postscript here, he says, *alone*:
Can you advise me?

Laer. I am lost in it, my lord. But let him come;
It warms the very sickness in my heart,
That I shall live and tell him to his teeth,
Thus diddest thou.

King. If it be so, Laertes,
As how should it be so? how otherwise? —
Will you be rul'd by me?

Laer. Ay, my lord;
So you will not o'errule me to a peace⁹.

King. To thine own peace. If he be now return'd, —
As checking¹⁰ at his voyage, and that he means
No more to undertake it, — I will work him
To an exploit, now ripe in my device,
Under the which he shall not choose but fall:
And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe;
But even his mother shall uncharge the practice,
And call it, accident.

Laer. My lord, I will be rul'd;
The rather, if you could devise it so,
That I might be the organ.

King. It falls right.
You have been talk'd of since your travel much,
And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality
Wherein, they say, you shine: your sum of parts
Did not together pluck such envy from him,
As did that one; and that, in my regard,
Of the unworthiest siege¹¹.

Laer. What part is that, my lord?

⁹ First folio omitting *Ay, my lord*, reads *If so you'll not o'errule me to a peace.*

¹⁰ To *check*, to hold off, or fly from. as in fear. It is a phrase taken from falconry: — 'For who knows not, quoth she, that this hawk, which comes now so fair to the first, may to-morrow *check* at the lure.' — *Hinde's Eliosto Libidinoso*, 1606.

¹¹ Of the unworthiest *siege*, of the lowest rank: *siege* for *seat* or *place* —

'——— I fetch my birth
From men of royal seige.'

Othello.

— *King.* A very ribband in the cap of youth,
Yet needful too; for youth no less becomes
The light and careless livery that it wears,
Than settled age his sables and his weeds,
Importing health and graveness¹². — Two months since,
Here was a gentleman of Normandy, —
I have seen myself, and serv'd against, the French,
And they can well on horseback: but this gallant
Had witchcraft in't; he grew unto his seat;
And to such wond'rous doing brought his horse,
As he had been incorp's'd and demi-natur'd
With the brave beast: so far he topp'd my thought,
That I, in forgery of shapes and tricks¹³,
Come short of what he did.

Laer. A Norman, was't?

King. A Norman.

Laer. Upon my life, Lamord.

King. The very same.

Laer. I know him well: he is the brooch, indeed,
And gem of all the nation.

King. He made confession of you;
And gave you such a masterly report,
For art and exercise in your defence¹⁴,
And for your rapier most especial.
That he cried out, 'twould be a sight indeed,
If one could match you: the scrimers¹⁵ of their nation,
He swore, had neither motion, guard, nor eye,
If you oppos'd them: Sir, this report of his
Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy,
That he could nothing do, but wish and beg
Your sudden coming o'er, to play with you.
Now, out of this, — —

Laer. What out of this, my lord?

¹² i. e. *implying* or *denoting* gravity and attention to health. If we should not rather read *wealth* for *health*.

¹³ 'That I, in *forgery* of shapes and tricks.'
'That I, in *imagining* and *describing* his feats,' &c.

¹⁴ Science of defence, i. e. fencing.

¹⁵ *Scrimers*, fencers, from *escrimeur*, Fr. This unfavourable description of French swordsmen is not in the folio.

King. Laertes, was your father dear to you?
Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,
A face without a heart?

Laer. Why ask you this?

King. Not that I think, you did not love your father;
But that I know, love is begun by time¹⁶;
And that I see, in passages of proof,
Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.
There lives within the very flame of love
A kind of wick, or snuff, that will abate it:
And nothing is at a like goodness still:
For goodness, growing to a plurisy¹⁷,
Dies in his own too-much: That we would do,
We should do when we would; for this *would* changes,
And hath abatements and delays as many,
As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents;
And then this *should* is like a spendthrift's sigh¹⁸,
That hurts by easing. But, to the quick o'the ulcer:
Hamlet comes back; What would you undertake,

16 'But that I know love is begun by time,' &c. 'As love is begun by *time*, and has its gradual increase, so *time* qualifies and abates it.' *Passages of proof* are transactions of daily experience. The next ten lines are not in the folio.

17 *Plurisy* is *superabundance*; our ancestors used the word in this sense, as if it came from *plus*, *pluris*, and not from *πλυσία*. The disease was formerly thought to proceed from too much blood flowing to the part affected: —

‘——— in a word,

Thy *plurisy* of goodness is thy ill.’

Massinger's Unnatural Combat.

18 Johnson says it is a prevalent notion 'that sighs impair the strength, and wear out the animal powers.' Steevens makes a ludicrous mistake in the quotation from the 'Governal of Helth,' wherein he takes *sythes* (times) to signify *sighs*. Shakspeare in King Henry VI. has '*blood-consuming sighs*.' And in Fenton's Tragical Discourses: — 'Your scorching *sighes* that have already drained your body of his wholesome humoures.' The reading of the old copies, which I have restored, had been altered in the modern editions to '*a spendthrift sigh*,' without reason. Mr. Blakeway justly observes, that 'Sorrow for neglected opportunities and time abused seems most aptly compared to the *sigh of a spendthrift* — good resolutions not carried into effect are deeply injurious to the moral character. Like sighs, *they hurt by easing*, they unburden the mind and satisfy the conscience, without producing any effect upon the conduct.'

To show yourself in deed your father's son
More than in words?

Laer. To cut his throat i'the church.

King. No place, indeed, should murder sanctuarize;
Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,
Will you do this, keep close within your chamber:
Hamlet, return'd, shall know you are come home:
We'll put on those shall praise your excellence,
And set a double varnish on the fame
The Frenchman gave you; bring you, in fine, together,
And wager o'er your heads: he, being remiss¹⁹,
Most generous, and free from all contriving,
Will not peruse the foils; so that, with ease,
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose
A sword unbated²⁰, and, in a pass of practice²¹,
Requite him for your father.

Laer. I will do't:
And, for the purpose, I'll anoint my sword.
I bought an unction of a mountebank,
So mortal, that but dip a knife in it,
Where it draws blood, no cataplasm so rare,
Collected from all simples that have virtue
Under the moon, can save the thing from death,
That is but scratch'd withal: I'll touch my point
With this contagion; that, if I gall him slightly,
It may be death²².

King. Let's further think of this;
Weigh, what convenience, both of time and means,

19 'He being remiss.' He being not vigilant; or incautious.

20 i. e. unblunted, to *bate*, or rather 'to *rebate*, was to make dull. *Aciem ferre hebetare*.' Thus in *Love's Labour's Lost* we have —

'That honour which shall *bate* his scythe's keen edge.'
And in *Measure for Measure*: —

'—— *rebate* and blunt his natural edge.'

21 *Pass of practice* is an *insidious thrust*. Shakspeare, in common with many of his cotemporaries, always uses *practice* for art, deceit, treachery.

22 Ritson has exclaimed with just indignation and abhorrence against the villanous assassinlike treachery of Laertes in this horrid plot: he observes 'There is more occasion that he should be pointed out for an object of abhorrence, as he is a character

May fit us to our shape: If this should fail,
 And that our drift look through our bad performance,
 'Twere better not assay'd: therefore this project
 Should have a back, or second, that might hold,
 If this should blast in proof²³. Soft; — let me see: —
 We'll make a solemn wager on your cunnings²⁴, —
 I ha't:

When in your motion you are hot and dry,
 (As make your bouts more violent to that end,)
 And that he calls for drink, I'll have prepar'd²⁵ him
 A chalice for the nonce; whereon but sipping,
 If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck²⁶,
 Our purpose may hold there. But stay, what noise²⁷?

Enter Queen.

How now, sweet queen?

Queen. One woe doth tread upon another's heel,
 So fast they follow: — Your sister's drown'd, Laertes.

Laer. Drown'd! O, where?

Queen. There is a willow grows ascaunt²⁸ the brook,
 That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream:
 Therewith fantastic garlands did she make
 Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples²⁹,

we are led to respect and admire in some preceding scenes.' In the old quarto of 1603 this contrivance originates with the king: —

'When you are hot, in midst of all your play,
 Among the foils shall a keen rapter lie,
 Steeped in a mixture of deadly poison.
 That if it draws but the least dram of blood
 In any part of him he cannot live.'

23 If this should *blast in proof*, as fire arms sometimes burst in proving their strength.

24 *Cunning* is skill.

25 The quarto reads *prefar'd*; the folio *prepar'd*. The modern editors read *preferr'd*, but I think without good reason.

26 A *stuck* is a *thrust*. *Stoccata*, Ital. Sometimes called a *staccado* in English.

27 'But stay, what noise?' these words are not in the folio.

28 *Ascaunt*, thus the quarto: the folio reads *aslant*. *Ascaunce* is the same as *askew*, sideways, overthwart; *à travers*, Fr.

29 The ancient botanical name of the *long purples* was *testiculis morionis*, or *orchis priapiscus*. The grosser name to which the queen alludes is sufficiently known in many parts of England. It had kindred appellations in other languages. In Sussex it is said to be called *dead men's hands*. Its various names may be seen in Lyte's Herbal, 1578, or in Cotgrave's Dictionary.

That liberal³⁰ shepherds give a grosser name,
 But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them:
 There on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds
 Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke;
 When down her weedy trophies, and herself,
 Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide;
 And, mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up:
 Which time, she chanted snatches of old tunes³¹;
 As one incapable³² of her own distress,
 Or like a creature native and indu'd³³
 Unto that element: but long it could not be,
 Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
 Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay
 To muddy death.

Laer. Alas then, she is drown'd?

Queen. Drown'd, drown'd.

Laer. Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,
 And therefore I forbid my tears: But yet³⁴
 It is our trick; nature her custom holds,
 Let shame say what it will: when these are gone,
 The woman will be out³⁵. — Adieu, my lord!
 I have a speech of fire, that fain would blaze,
 But that this folly drowns³⁶ it. *[Exit.*

King. Let's follow, Gertrude:
 How much I had to do to calm his rage!

30 i. e. *licentious*. See *Much Ado about Nothing*, Act iv. Sc. 1, and *Othello*, Act ii. Sc. 1.

31 The quarto reads 'snatches of old lauds,' i. e. *hymns*. Hymns of praise were so called from the psalm *Laudate Dominum*.

32 i. e. *unsusceptible* of it. See note 21, p. 114.

33 *Indu'd* was anciently used in the sense of *endowed* with qualities of any kind, as in the phrase 'a child *indued* with the grace and dexteritie that his father had.' Shakspeare may, however, have used it for *habited*, *accustomed*.

34 Thus the quarto 1603: —

'Therefore I will not drown thee in my tears,
 Revenge it is must yield this heart relief,
 For woe begets woe, and grief hangs on grief.'

35 Thus in *King Henry V.* Act iv. Sc. 6: —

'But all my mother came into my eyes,
 And gave me up to tears.'

36 The folio reads — *doubts* it.

Now fear I, this will give it start again;
Therefore, let's follow.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I. *A Church-yard.*

Enter Two Clowns, with Spades, &c.

1 *Clo.* Is she to be buried in christian burial, that wilfully seeks her own salvation?

2 *Clo.* I tell thee, she is; therefore make her grave straight¹: the crowner hath set on her, and finds it christian burial.

1 *Clo.* How can that be, unless she drowned herself in her own defence?

2 *Clo.* Why, 'tis found so.

1 *Clo.* It must be *se offendendo*; it cannot be else. For here lies the point: If I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act; and an act hath three branches; it is, to act, to do, and to perform²: Argal, she drowned herself wittingly.

1 How Johnson could think that any particular mode of making Ophelia's grave was meant I cannot imagine. Nothing is so common as this mode of expression: *straight* is merely a contraction of *straightway*, immediately. Numerous examples are to be found in Shakspeare, one may suffice from this very play, in Act iii. Sc. 4, Polonius says: —

‘He will come *straight*.’

And Malone cites from G. Herbert's *Jacula Prudentium*, 1651: — ‘There is no churchyard so handsome that a man would desire *straight* to be buried there.’

2 Warburton says that this is a ridicule on scholastic divisions without distinction; and of distinctions without difference. Shakspeare certainly aims at the legal subtleties used upon occasion of inquests. Sir John Hawkins points out the case of Dame Hales, in Plowden's *Comentaries*. Her husband Sir James drowned himself in a fit of insanity (produced, it was supposed, by his having been one of the judges who condemned Lady Jane Grey), and the question was about the forfeiture of a lease. There was a great deal of this law logic used on the occasion, as whether he was the

2 *Clo.* Nay, but hear you, goodman delver.

1 *Clo.* Give me leave. Here lies the water; good; here stands the man; good: If the man go to this water, and drown himself, it is, will he, nill he, he goes; mark you that: but if the water come to him, and drown him, he drowns not himself: Argal, he, that is not guilty of his own death, shortens not his own life.

2 *Clo.* But is this law?

1 *Clo.* Ay, marry is't; crowner's-quest law³.

2 *Clo.* Will you ha' the truth on't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out of christian burial.

1 *Clo.* Why, there thou say'st: And the more pity; that great folks shall have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves, more than their even-christian⁴. Come, my spade. There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers: they hold up Adam's profession.

2 *Clo.* Was he a gentleman?

1 *Clo.* He was the first that ever bore arms.

2 *Clo.* Why, he had none⁵.

agent or patient; or in other words (as the clown says), whether *he went to the water, or the water came to him*. Malone thinks because Plowden was in law French that Shakspeare could not read him! and yet Malone has shown that Shakspeare is very fond of legal phraseology, and supposes that he must have passed some part of his life in the office of an attorney.

3 *Coroner* is an officer whose office is concerned principally with pleas of the *crown*. One chief part of his duty is, when a person is slain or dies suddenly or in prison, to inquire into the manner of his death. This must be done by a jury, on sight of the body, and at the place where the death happened.

4 *Even-christian*, for *fellow-christian*, was the old mode of expression; and is to be found in Chaucer and the Chroniclers. Wicliffe has *even-servant* for *fellow-servant*. The fact is, that *even*, *like*, and *equal* were synonymous. I will add one more ancient example of the phrase to those cited by Malone: —

‘For when a man wol right knowe,
Al maner of dette that he owe,
Bothe to God that is ful of might
And to his *even cristen* right.

Hampole's Speculum Vitae.

In Alfred's Saxon version of S. Gregory's *Pastoralis Cura*, we have *efon-deaw*, consocius.

5 This speech and the next, as far as *arms*, is not in the quarto.

1 *Clo.* What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the scripture? The scripture says, Adam digged; Could he dig without arms? I'll put another question to thee: if thou answerest me not to the purpose, confess thyself — —

2 *Clo.* Go to.

1 *Clo.* What is he, that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?

2 *Clo.* The gallows-maker, for that frame outlives a thousand tenants.

1 *Clo.* I like thy wit well, in good faith; the gallows does well: But how does it well? it does well to those that do ill: now thou dost ill, to say, the gallows is built stronger than the church: argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To't again; come.

2 *Clo.* Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?

1 *Clo.* Ay, tell me that, and unyoke⁶.

2 *Clo.* Marry, now I can tell.

1 *Clo.* To't.

2 *Clo.* Mass, I cannot tell.

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO, at a distance.

1 *Clo.* Cudgel thy brains no more about it; for your dull ass will not mend his pace with beating: and, when you are asked this question next, say, a grave-maker; the houses that he makes, last till doomsday. Go, get thee to Yaughan and fetch me a stoup of liquor. [Exit 2 Clown.]

6 'Ay, tell me that, and *unyoke*.' This was a common phrase for giving over or ceasing to do a thing, a metaphor derived from the *unyoking* of oxen at the end of their labour. Thus in a dittie of the Workmen of Dover, preserved in the additions to Holinshed: —

'My bow is broke, I would *unyoke*,

My foot is sore, I can worke no more.'

These pithy questions were doubtless the fireside amusement of our rustic ancestors. Steevens mentions a collection of them in pirnt, preserved in a volume of scarce tracts in the university library at Cambridge, D. 5. 2. 'The innocence of these *demaundes joyous* (he says) may deserve a praise not always due to their delicacy.'

1 Clown digs, and sings.

*In youth, when I did love, did love⁷,
Methought, it was very sweet,
To contract, O, the time, for, ah, my behove
O, methought, there was nothing meet.*

Ham. Has this fellow no feeling of his business? he sings at grave-making.

Hor. Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.

Ham. 'Tis e'en so: the hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.

1 Clo. *But age, with his stealing steps,
Hath claw'd me in his clutch,
And hath shipped me into the land,
As if I had never been such.*

[Throws up a scull.

Ham. That scull had a tongue in it, and could sing once: How the knave jowls it to the ground, as if it were Cain's jawbone, that did the first murder! This might be the pate of a politician, which this ass now o'er-reaches⁸; one that would circumvent God, might it not?

Hor. It might, my lord.

Ham. Or of a courtier; which could say, *Good-morrow, sweet lord! How dost thou, good lord?* This

⁷ The original ballad from whence these stanzas are taken is printed in Tottel's Miscellany, or 'Songes and Sonnettes' by Loro Surrey and others, 1575. The ballad is attributed to Lord Vaux, and is printed by Dr. Percy in the first volume of his Reliques of Ancient Poetry. The ohs and the ahs were most probably meant to express the interruption of the song by the forcible emission of the grave digger's breath at each stroke of the mattock. The original runs thus: —

*'I lothe that I did love;
In youth that I thought swete:
As time requires for my behove,
Methinks they are not mete.*

*'For age with stealing steps
Hath claude me with his crowch;
And lusty youthe away he leaps,
As there had bene none such.'*

The folio reads — *ore-offices.*

might be my lord such-a-one, that praised my lord such-a-one's horse, when he meant to beg it; might it not⁹?

Hor. Ay, my lord.

Ham. Why, e'en so, and now my lady Worm's¹⁰; chapless, and knocked about the mazzard with a sexton's spade: Here's fine revolution, an we had the trick to see't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding, but to play at loggats¹¹ with them? mine ache to think on't.

1 Clo. *A pick-axe and a spade, a spade,* [Sings.

For — and a shrouding sheet:

O, a pit of clay for to be made

For such a guest is meet.

[Throws up a Scull.

Ham. There's another: Why may not that be the scull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddits¹² now, his quilllets, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce¹³ with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery? Humph! This fellow might be in's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers¹⁴, his

9 '—— My lord, you gave
Good words the other day of a bay courser
I rode on; it is yours, because you liked it.'

Timon of Athens, Act i.

10 The scull that was my lord such-a-one's is now my lady worm's.

11 *Loggets*, small logs or pieces of wood. Hence *loggets* was the name of an ancient rustic game, in which a stake was fixed in the ground at which *loggats* were thrown; in short, a ruder kind of quoit play.

12 *Quiddits* are quirks, or subtle questions; and *quilllets* are nice and frivolous distinctions. The etymology of this last foolish word has plagued many learned heads. I think that Blount, in his *Glossography*, clearly points out *quodlibet* as the origin of it. Bishop Wilkins calls a *quillet* 'a frivolousness;' and Coles in his Latin Dict. *res frivola*. I find the quarto of 1603 has *quirks* instead of *quiddits*.

13 See Comedy of Errors, Act i. Sc. 2. note 6.

14 Shakspeare here is profuse of his legal learning. Ritson, a lawyer, shall interpret for him: — 'A recovery with *double voucher*, is the one usually suffered, and is so called from *two* persons (the latter of whom is always the common cryer, or some such inferior person) being successively *voucher*, or called upon to warrant the tenant's title. Both *fines* and *recoveries* are fictions of law,

recoveries: Is this the fine of his fines, and the recovery of his recoveries¹⁵, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt? will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures? The very conveyances of his lands will hardly lie in this box; and must the inheritor himself have no more? ha?

Hor. Not a jot more, my lord.

Ham. Is not parchment made of sheep-skins?

Hor. Ay, my lord, and of calves-skins too.

Ham. They are sheep, and calves, which seek out assurance¹⁵ in that. I will speak to this fellow: — Whose grave's this, sirrah?

1 Clo. Mine, sir. —

O, a pit of clay for to be made [Sings.
For such a guest is meet.

Ham. I think it be thine, indeed; for thou liest in't.

1 Clo. You lie out on't, sir, and therefore it is not yours: for my part, I do not lie in't, yet it is mine.

Ham. Thou dost lie in't, to be in't, and say it is thine: 'tis for the dead, not for the quick; therefore thou liest.

1 Clo. 'Tis a quick lie, sir; 'twill away again, from me to you.

Ham. What man dost thou dig it for?

1 Clo. For no man, sir.

Ham. What woman then?

1 Clo. For none neither.

Ham. Who is to be buried in't?

1 Clo. One, that was a woman, sir; but, rest her soul, she's dead.

used to convert an estate tail into a fee simple. Statutes are (not acts of parliament) but statutes *merchant*, and *staple*, particular modes of *recognizance* or acknowledgment for securing *debts*, which thereby become a charge upon the party's land. *Statutes* and *recognizances* are constantly mentioned together in the covenants of a purchase deed.

¹⁵ ['Is this the fine of his fines, and the recovery of his recoveries,'] omitted in the quarto.

¹⁶ A quibble is intended. *Deeds* (of parchment) are called the common *assurances* of the realm.

Ham. How absolute the knave is! we must speak by the card¹⁷, or equivocation will undo us. By the lord, Horatio, these three¹⁸ years I have taken note of it; the age is grown so picked¹⁹, that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he galls his kibe. — How long hast thou been a grave-maker?

1 *Clo.* Of all the days i'the year, I came to't that day that our last king Hamlet overcame Fortinbras²⁰.

Ham. How long's that since?

1 *Clo.* Cannot you tell that? every fool can tell that: It was that very day that young Hamlet was born²¹: he that is mad, and sent into England.

Ham. Ay, marry, why was he sent into England.

1 *Clo.* Why, because he was mad: he shall recover his wits there; or, if he do not, 'tis no great matter there.

Ham. Why?

1 *Clo.* 'Twill not be seen in him there; there the men are as mad as he²².

17 'To speak by the card,' is to speak precisely, by rule, or according to a prescribed course. It is a metaphor from the seaman's *card* or chart by which he guides his course.

18 *Seven*, quarto 1603.

19 There may be an allusion to the shoes with pointed toes, of a monstrous length, so generally worn in England, that it was restrained at last by proclamation, so long ago as the 5th of Edward IV. when it was ordered 'that the beaks or pykes of shoes and boots should not pass two inches, upon pain of cursing by the clergy, and forfeiting 20 shillings, one noble to the king, another to the Cordwainers of London, and the third to the Chamber of London: and for other countries and towns the like order was taken.

20 'Look you, here's a skull hath been here this *dozen* year, let me see, ay, ever since our last King Hamlet slew Fortenbrasse in combat. young Hamlet's father, he that's mad.' Quarto of 1603. It will be seen that the poet places this event *thirty* years ago in the present copy. See the next note by Sir William Blackstone.

21 'By this scene it appears that Hamlet was then thirty years old, and knew Yorick well, who had been dead twenty three years. And yet in the beginning of the play he is spoken of as a *very young* man, one that designed to go back to school, i. e. to the university of Wittenburgh. The poet in the fifth act had forgot what he wrote in the first.' — *Blackstone*.

22 'Nimirum insanus paucis videatur; eo quod
Maxima pars hominum morbo jactatur eodem.'

Horat. Sat. 3, Lib. ii.

Ham. How came he mad?

1 *Clo.* Very strangely, they say.

Ham. How strangely?

1 *Clo.* 'Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

Ham. Upon what ground?

1 *Clo.* Why, here in Denmark; I have been sexton here, man, and boy, thirty years.

Ham. How long will a man lie i'the earth ere he rot?

1 *Clo.* 'Faith, if he be not rotten before he die, (as we have many pocky corses now-a-days, that will scarce hold the laying in,) he will last you some eight year, or nine year: a tanner will last you nine year.

Ham. Why he more than another?

1 *Clo.* Why, sir, his hide is so tanned with his trade, that he will keep out water a great while; and your water is a sore decayer of your whoreson dead body. Here's a scull now hath lain you i'the earth three-and-twenty years.

Ham. Whose was it?

1 *Clo.* A whoreson mad fellow's it was; Whose do you think it was?

Ham. Nay, I know not.

1 *Clo.* A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! he poured a flagon of Rhenish on my head once. This same scull, sir, was Yorick's scull, the king's jester.

Ham. This? *[Takes the Scull.]*

1 *Clo.* E'en that.

Ham. Alas, poor Yorick! — I knew him, Horatio; a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy: he hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now, how abhorred in my imagination it is! my gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips, that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning²³? quite chap-fallen? Now get you to my lady's chamber²⁴, and tell her, let her

23 Folio — *jeering*.

24 Quarto — *table*.

paint an inch thick, to this favour²⁵ she must come; make her laugh at that. — 'Pr'ythee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

Hor. What's that, my lord?

Ham. Dost thou think, Alexander look'd o'this fashion i'the earth?

Hor. E'en so.

Ham. And smelt so? pah! [*Throws down the Scull.*]

Hor. E'en so, my lord.

Ham. To what base uses we may return, Horatio! Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till he find it stopping a bunghole?

Hor. 'Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so.

Ham. No, 'faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither with modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it: As thus; Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth to dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make loam: And why of that loam, whereto he was converted, might they not stop a beer-barrel?

Imperious²⁶ Caesar, dead, and turn'd to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away:

O, that the earth, which kept the world in awe,
Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw²⁷!

But soft! but soft! aside; — Here comes the king.

*Enter Priests, &c. in Procession; the Corpse of
OPHELIA, LAERTES, and Mourners following;
King, Queen, their Trains, &c.*

The queen, the courtiers: Who is this they follow?
And with such maimed rites! This doth betoken,
The corse, they follow, did with desperate hand

²⁵ *Favour* is countenance, complexion.

²⁶ *Imperial* is substituted in the folio. Vide *Troilus and Cressida*, Act iv. Sc. 5, note 27.

²⁷ A *flaw* is a violent gust of wind. See *Coriolanus*, Act v. Sc. 3, note 8.

Fordo²⁸ its own life. 'Twas of some estate²⁹.
Couch we awhile, and mark. [*Retiring with HORATIO.*]

Laer. What ceremony else?

Ham. That is Laertes,

A very noble youth: Mark.

Laer. What ceremony else?

1 *Priest*³⁰. Her obsequies have been as far enlarg'd
As we have warranty: Her death was doubtful;
And, but that great command o'ersways the order,
She should in ground unsanctified have lodg'd
Till the last trumpet; for charitable prayers,
Shards³¹, flints, and pebbles, should be thrown on her,
Yet here she is allow'd her virgin crants³²,
Her maiden strewments, and the bringing home
Of bell and burial.

Laer. Must there no more be done?

1 *Priest.* No more be done!
We should profane the service of the dead,
To sing a *requiem*³³, and such rest to her
As to peace-parted souls.

28 To *fordo* is to undo, to destroy. Thus in *Othello*: —

‘— This is the night

That either makes me or *fordo*es me quite.’

‘Would to God it might be leful for me to *fordo* myself, or to make an end of me.’ — *Acolastus*, 1529.

29 *Estate* for rank. *Estates* was a common term for persons of rank.

30 Quarto — *Doctor*.

31 *Shards*, quasi *shreds* (as Tooke says), the past participle of the verb *fegran*, to sheer, cut off, or divide. It does not only mean fragments of pots and tiles, but rubbish of any kind. Baret has ‘*shard*es of stones, fragmentum lapidis;’ and ‘*shard*es, or pieces of stones broken and shattred, rubbel or rubbish of old houses.’ Our version of the Bible has preserved to us *potsherds*; and I have heard bricklayers, in Surrey and Sussex, use the compounds *tile-sherds*, *slate-sherds*, &c.

32 i. e. garlands. Still used in most northern languages, but no other example of its use among us has yet offered itself. It is thought that Shakspeare may have met with the word in some old history of Hamlet, which furnished him with his fable. The editor of the first folio changed this unusual word for *rites*, a less appropriate word. Warburton boldly substituted *chants*, and Mr. Alexander Chalmers affirms that this is the true word.

33 A *requiem* is a mass sung for the rest of the soul of the dead. So called from the words —

‘*Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine*, &c.
part of the service.

Laer. Lay her i'the earth; —
 And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
 May violets spring³⁴! — I tell thee, churlish priest,
 A minist'ring angel shall my sister be,
 When thou liest howling.

Ham. What, the fair Ophelia!

Queen. Sweets to the sweet: Farewell!

[Scattering Flowers.]

I hop'd, thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife;
 I thought, thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,
 And not have strew'd thy grave.

Laer. O, treble woe
 Fall ten times treble on that cursed head,
 Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense
 Depriv'd thee off! — Hold off the earth awhile,
 Till I have caught her once more in mine arms:

[Leaps into the Grave.]

Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead;
 Till of this flat a mountain you have made
 To o'ertop old Pelion, or the skyish head
 Of blue Olympus.

Ham. *[Advancing.]* What is he, whose grief
 Bears such an emphasis? whose phrase of sorrow
 Conjures the wand'ring stars, and makes them stand
 Like wonder-wounded hearers? this is I,
 Hamlet the Dane.

[Leaps into the Grave.]

Laer. The devil take thy soul!

[Grappling with him.]

Ham. Thou pray'st not well.
 I pr'ythee, take thy fingers from my throat;
 For, though I am not splenetic and rash,
 Yet have I in me something dangerous,
 Which let thy wisdom fear: Hold off thy hand.

King. Pluck them asunder.

Queen. Hamlet, Hamlet!

All. Gentlemen, — —

Hor. Good my lord, be quiet.

[*The Attendants part them, and they come out of the Grave.*]

Ham. Why, I will fight with him upon this theme,
Until my eyelids will no longer wag.

Queen. O my son! what theme?

Ham. I lov'd Ophelia; forty thousand brothers
Could not, with all their quantity of love,
Make up my sum. — What wilt thou do for her?

King. O, he is mad, Laertes.

Queen. For love of God, forbear him.

Ham. 'Zounds, show me what thou'lt do:
Woo't weep? woo't fight? woo't fast? woo't tear
thyself?

Woo't drink up Esil³⁵, eat a crocodile?
I'll do't. — Dost thou come here to whine?

To outface me with leaping in her grave?

Be buried quick with her, and so will I:

And, if thou prate of mountains, let them throw
Millions of acres on us; till our ground,

35 The quarto of 1603 reads: — '*Wilt drink up vessels:*' and instead of Ossa, Oosell. Some of the commentators have supposed that by *esill* Hamlet means *vinegar*. But surely the strain of exaggeration and rant of the rest of the speech requires some more impossible feat than that of drinking up vinegar. What river, lake, or firth Shakspeare meant to designate is uncertain, perhaps the Issel, but the firth of *Iyse* is nearest to his scene of action, and near enough in name. What the late editors meant by their strange contraction *would* I know not. Mr. Gifford observes that they appear none of them to have understood the grammatical construction of the passage. *Woo't* or *woot'o*, in the northern counties, is the common contraction of *wouldst thou*, and this is the reading of the old copies. This sort of hyperbole Malone has shown was common with our ancient poets: —

'Come drink up Rhine, Thames, and Meander dry.'

Eastward Hoe, 1609.

'Else would I set my mouth to Tygris streams,
And drink up overflowing Euphrates.'

Greene's Orlando Furioso, 1599.

'Sooner shall thou drink the ocean dry

Than conquer Malta.'

Marlowe's Jew of Malta.

Shakspeare also in *King Richard II.*: —

'—— The task he undertakes

Is numbering sands and drinking oceans dry.'

And in *Troilus and Cressida*: — 'When we vow to weep seas, live
in fire, eat rocks, tame tigers,' &c.

Singeing his pate against the burning zone,
Make Ossa like a wart! Nay, an thou'lt mouth,
I'll rant as well as thou.

Queen. This is mere madness:
And thus a while the fit will work on him;
Anon, as patient as the female dove,
When that her golden couplets are disclosed³⁶,
His silence will sit drooping.

Ham. Hear you, sir;
What is the reason that you use me thus?
I lov'd you ever: But it is no matter;
Let Hercules himself do what he may,
The cat will mew, the dog will have his day. [*Exit.*

King. I pray thee, good Horatio, wait upon him. —
[*Exit* HORATIO.
Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech;
[*To* LAERTES.

We'll put the matter to the present push. —
Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son. —
This grave shall have a living monument:
An hour of quiet shortly shall we see;
Till then, in patience our proceeding be. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *A Hall in the Castle.*

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO.

Ham. So much for this, sir: now shall you see the
other; —

You do remember all the circumstance?

Hor. Remember it, my lord!

Ham. Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting,
That would not let me sleep: methought, I lay

³⁶ See note 30 on Act iii. Sc. 1, p. 85. The *golden couplets* alludes to the dove only laying two eggs. The young nestlings when first disclosed are only covered with a yellow down, and the mother rarely leaves the nest, in consequence of the tenderness of her young.

Worse than the mutines¹ in the bilboes². Rashly,
And prais'd be rashness for it, — Let us know,
Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,
When our deep plots do pall³: and that should teach us,
There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will.

Hor. That is most certain.

Ham. Up from my cabin,
My sea-gown scarf'd about me, in the dark
Grop'd I to find out them: had my desire;
Finger'd their packet, and, in fine, withdrew
To mine own room again: making so bold,
My fears forgetting manners, to unseal
Their grand commission; where I found, Horatio,
A royal knavery; an exact command, —
Larded with many several sorts of reasons, —
Importing Denmark's health, and England's too,
With, ho! such bugs⁴ and goblins in my life, —
That, on the supervise⁵, no leisure bated,
No, not to stay the grinding of the axe,
My head should be struck off.

Hor. Is't possible?

Ham. Here's the commission; read it at more leisure.
But wilt thou hear now how I did proceed?

¹ *Mutines* — the french word for seditions or disobedient fellows in the army or fleet.

² The *bilboes* were bars of iron with fetters annexed to them, by which mutinous or disorderly sailors were anciently linked together. The word is derived from *Bilboa*, in Spain, where implements of iron and steel were fabricated. To understand Shakespeare's allusion, it should be known that as these fetters connected the legs of the offenders very closely together, their attempts to rest must be as fruitless as those of Hamlet, in whose mind *there was a kind of fighting that would not let him sleep*. Every motion of one must disturb his partner in confinement. The *bilboes* are still shown in the Tower, among the other spoils of the Spanish Armada.

³ To pall i. e. to fail.

⁴ 'With, ho! such bugs and goblins in my life.' 'With such causes of terror arising from my character and designs.' Bugs were no less terrific than goblins. We now call them *bugbears*.

⁵ '—— on the supervise, no leisure bated.' The *supervise* is the looking over; *no leisure bated* means without any abatement or intermission of time.

Hor. Ay, 'beseech you.

Ham. Being thus benetted round with villanies,
Or⁶ I could make a prologue to my brains,
They had begun the play; — I sat me down;
Devis'd a new commission; wrote it fair:
I once did hold it, as our statist⁷ do,
A baseness to write fair, and labour'd much
How to forget that learning; but, sir, now
It did me yeoman's service⁸: Wilt thou know
The effect of what I wrote?

Hor. Ay, good my lord.

Ham. An earnest conjuration from the king, —
As England was his faithful tributary;
As love between them like the palm might flourish;
As peace should still her wheaten garland wear,
And stand a comma⁹ 'tween their amities;
And many such like as's¹⁰ of great charge, —
That, on the view and knowing of these contents,
Without debatement further, more or less,
He should the bearers put to sudden death,
Not shriving-time allow'd¹¹.

Hor. How was this seal'd?

Ham. Why, even in that was heaven ordinant;
I had my father's signet in my purse,
Which was the model of that Danish seal:
Folded the writ up in form of the other;
Subscrib'd it; gave't the impression; plac'd it safely,

6 Or, in old English, for *ere*, before.

7 *Statists* are statesmen. Blackstone says, that 'most of our great men of Shakspeare's times, whose autographs have been preserved, wrote very bad hands; their secretaries very neat ones.'

8 *Yeoman's service* I take to be *good substantial service*. The ancient yeomen were famous for their staunch valour in the field; and Sir Thomas Smyth says, they were 'the stable troop of footmen that affraide all France.'

9 [— stand a *comma* 'tween their amities.] This is oddly expressed, as Johnson observes: but the meaning appears to be, 'Stand as *comma*, i. e. as a note of connexion between their amities, to prevent them from being brought to a *period*.'

10 *Asses* heavily loaded. A quibble is intended between *as* the conditional particle, and *ass* the beast of burden.

11 [Not shriving-time allow'd.] That is, without allowing time for the confession of their sins.

The changeling never known: Now, the next day
Was our sea-fight; and what to this was sequent
Thou know'st already.

Hor. So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't.

Ham. Why, man, they did make love to this employment;

They are not near my conscience; their defeat
Does by their own insinuation grow:

'Tis dangerous, when the baser nature comes
Between the pass and fell incensed points
Of mighty opposites.

Hor. Why, what a king is this!

Ham. Does it not, think thee, stand me now upon¹²?
He that hath kill'd my king, and whor'd my mother;
Popp'd in between the election and my hopes;
Thrown out his angle for my proper life,
And with such cozenage; is't not perfect conscience,
To quit him with this arm; and is't not to be damn'd,
To let this canker of our nature come
In further evil?

Hor. It must be shortly known to him from England,
What is the issue of the business there.

Ham. It will be short: the interim is mine;
And a man's life no more than to say, one.
But I am very sorry, good Horatio,
That to Laertes I forgot myself;
For by the image of my cause, I see
The portraiture of his: I'll count¹³ his favours:
But, sure, the bravery of his grief did put me
Into a towering passion.

Hor.

Peace: who comes here?

¹² [*Bethink thee*, does it not become incumbent upon me to requite him, &c.] Vide note upon King Richard II. Act ii. Sc. 3, vol. v. p. 52. This passage and the three following speeches are not in the quartos.

¹³ [— I'll count his favours.] Rowe changed this to 'I'll court his favour;' but there is no necessity for change. Hamlet means, 'I'll make account of his favours,' i. e. of his good will; for this was the general meaning of favours in the poet's time.

*Enter OSRIC*¹⁴.

Osr. Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

Ham. I humbly thank you, sir. — Dost know this water-fly¹⁵?

Hor. No, my good lord.

Ham. Thy state is the more gracious; for 'tis a vice to know him: He hath much land, and fertile; let a beast be lord of beasts, and his crib shall stand at the king's mess: 'Tis a chough; but, as I say, spacious in the possession of dirt.

Osr. Sweet lord, if your lordship were at leisure, I should impart a thing to you from his majesty.

Ham. I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of spirit: Your bonnet to his right use; 'tis for the head.

Osr. I thank your lordship, 'tis very hot.

Ham. No, believe me, sir, 'tis very cold: the wind is northerly.

Osr. It is indifferent cold, my lord, indeed.

Ham. But yet, methinks, it is very sultry and hot; or my complexion — —

Osr. Exceedingly, my lord; it is very sultry¹⁶, — as 'twere, — I cannot tell how — My lord, his majesty bade me signify to you, that he has laid a great wager on your head: Sir, this is the matter, —

Ham. I beseech you, remember — —

[HAMLET moves him to put on his Hat.

Osr. Nay, good my lord; for my ease, in good faith¹⁷. Sir, here is newly come to court, Laertes:

14 The quarto of 1603 — *Enter a braggart Gentleman.*

15 In *Troilus and Cressida*, Thersites says, 'How the poor world is pestered with such *water flies*; diminutives of nature.' The gnats and such like ephemeral insects skipping up and down upon the surface of the water, without any apparent purpose or reason, are not inapt emblems of such busy triflers as Osrick.

16 [Exceedingly, my lord; 'tis very sultry.]

'— igniculum brumae si tempore poscas

Accipit endromidem; si dexteris aestuo, sudat.'

Juvenal.

17 The folio omits this and the following fourteen speeches; and in their place substitutes, 'Sir, you are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is at his weapon.'

believe me, an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent differences¹⁸, of very soft society, and great showing: Indeed, to speak feelingly of him, he is the card¹⁹ or calendar of gentry, for you shall find in him the continent²⁰ of what part a gentleman would see.

Ham. Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you; — though, I know, to divide him inventorially, would dizzy the arithmetic of memory; and yet but raw neither, in respect of his quick sail. But, in the verity of extolment, I take him to be a soul of great article; and his infusion of such dearth²¹ and rareness, as, to make true diction of him, his semblable is his mirror; and, who else would trace him, his umbrage, nothing more²².

Osr. Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him.

Ham. The concernancy, sir? why do we wrap the gentleman in our more rawer breath?

Osr. Sir?

Hor. Is't not possible to understand in another tongue! You will do't, sir, really²³.

18 i. e. *distinguishing* excellencies.

19 'The *card* or *calendar* of gentry.' The general preceptor of elegance; the *card* (chart) by which a gentleman is to direct his course; the *calendar* by which he is to order his time. See Act v. Sc. 1, note 17.

20 'You shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see.' *You shall find him containing and comprising every quality which a gentleman would desire to contemplate for imitation.* Perhaps we should read, 'You shall find him the continent.'

21 *Dearth*, according to Tooke, is 'the third person singular of the verb *to dere*; it means some cause which *dereth*, i. e. maketh dear; or hurteth, or doth mischief.' That *dearth* was, therefore, used for *scarcity*, as well as *dearness*, appears from the following passage in a MS. petition to the council, by the merchants of London, 6 Edw. VI.: speaking of the causes of the *dearness* of cloth they say, 'This detriment cometh through the *dearth* of wool, the procurers whereof being a few in number for the augmentation of the same.' — *Conway Papers*. See vol. i. p. 355, note 5.

22 This speech is a ridicule of the Euphuism, or court jargon of that time.

23 [Is it not possible to understand in another tongue? You will do't, sir, really.] This interrogatory remark is very obscure. The sense may be, 'Is it not possible for this fantastic fellow to understand in plainer language? You will, however, imitate his jargon admirably, really, sir.' It seems very probable that 'another tongue' is an error of the press for 'mother tongue.'

Ham. What imports the nomination of this gentleman?

Osr. Of Laertes?

Hor. His purse is empty already; all his golden words are spent.

Ham. Of him, sir.

Osr. I know, you are not ignorant — —

Ham. I would, you did, sir; yet, in faith, if you did, it would not much approve me²⁴; — Well, sir.

Osr. You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is — —

Ham. I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with him in excellence; but, to know a man well, were to know himself²⁵.

Osr. I mean, sir, for his weapon; but in the imputation laid on him by them, in his meed²⁶ he's unfellowed.

Ham. What's his weapon?

Osr. Rapier and dagger.

Ham. That's two of his weapons: but, well.

Osr. The king, sir, hath wagered with him six Barbary horses: against the which he has impawned²⁷, as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hangers²⁸, and so: Three of the carriages, in faith, are very dear to fancy, very responsive to the hilts, most delicate carriages, and of very liberal conceit.

24 [If you did, if would not *tend* much toward proving me or confirming me.] — What Hamlet would have added we know not; but surely Shakspeare's use of the word *approve*, upon all occasions, is against Johnson's explanation of it — '*to recommend to approbation.*' There is no consistency in the commentators; they rarely look at the prevalent sense of a word in the poet, but explain it many ways, to suit their own views of the meaning of a passage.

25 [I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with him, &c.] I dare not pretend to know him, lest I should pretend to an equality: no man can completely know another, but by knowing himself, which is the utmost extent of human wisdom.

26 *Meed* is *merit*. Vide King Henry VI. Part III. Act II. Sc. 1.

27 '*Impawned.*' The folio reads *imponed*. *Pignare*, in Italian, signifies both to *impawn* and to *lay a wager*. The stakes are, indeed, a *gage* or *pledge*.

28 *Hangers*, that part of the belt by which the sword was suspended.

Ham. What call you the carriages?

Hor. I knew, you must be edified by the margent²⁹, ere you had done.

Osr. The carriages, sir, are the hangers.

Ham. The phrase would be more german³⁰ to the matter, if we could carry a cannon by our sides; I would, it might be hangers till then. But, on: Six Barbary horses against six French swords, their assigns, and three liberal-conceited carriages; that's the French bet against the Danish: Why is this impawned, as you call it?

Osr. The king, sir, hath laid, that in a dozen passes between yourself and him, he shall not exceed you three hits³¹; he hath laid on twelve for nine; and it would come to immediate trial, if your lordship would vouchsafe the answer.

Ham. How, if I answer, no?

Osr. I mean, my lord, the opposition of your person in trial.

Ham. Sir, I will walk here in the hall: If it please his majesty, it is the breathing time of day with me: let the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the king hold his purpose, I will win for him, if I can; if not, I will gain nothing but my shame, and the odd hits.

Osr. Shall I deliver you so?

Ham. To this effect, sir; after what flourish your nature will.

Osr. I commend my duty to your lordship. [*Exit.*

Ham. Yours, yours. — He does well to commend it himself; there are no tongues else for's turn.

²⁹ 'The *margent*.' The gloss or commentary in old books was usually printed on the *margin* of the leaf.

³⁰ i. e. more *a kin*. 'Those that are *german* to him, though fifty times removed, shall come under the hangman.' — *Winter's Tale*.

³¹ The conditions of the wager are thus given in the quarto of 1603: —

'Marry, sir, that young Leartes in twelve venies
At rapier and dagger, do not get three odds of you.'

Hor. This lapwing³² runs away with the shell on his head.

Ham. He did comply³³ with his dug, before he sucked it. Thus has he (and many more of the same bevy³⁴, that, I know, the drossy age dotes on,) only got the tune of the time, and outward habit of encounter³⁵; a kind of yesty collection, which carries them through and through the most fanned and winnowed opinions³⁶; and do but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out.

*Enter a Lord*³⁷.

Lord. My lord, his majesty commended him to you by young Osric, who brings back to him, that you

32 [This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head.] Horatio means to call Osrick a raw, unfledged, foolish fellow. It was a common comparison for a forward fool. Thus in Meres's Wits Treasury, 1598: — 'As the lapwing runneth away with the shell on her head, as soon as she is hatched,' &c.

Forward lapwing,

He flies with the shell an his head.'

Vittoria Corombona.

33 'He did *comply* with his dug, before he sucked it.' See note 47, on Act ii. Sc. 2, p. 68.

34 The folio reads, '*mine* more of the same bevy.' *Mine* is evidently a misprint, and more likely for *manie* (i. e. many) than *mine*. The quarto of 1604 reads, '*many* more of the same *breed*.'

35 'Outward habit of encounter' is exterior politeness of address.

36 [A kind of yesty collection, which carries them through and through the most *fanned* and *winnowed* opinions, &c.] The folio reads, *fond* and *winnowed*. The corruption of the quarto, '*prophane* and *trennowed*,' is not worth attention; and I have no doubt that *fond* in the folio should be *fanned*, formerly spelt *fan'd*, and sometimes even without the apostrophe. Fanned and winnowed are almost always coupled by old writers, for reasons that may be seen under those words in Baret's Alvearie. So Shakspeare himself in Troilus and Cressida: —

'Distinction with a broad and powerful *fan*,

Puffing at all, *winnows* the light away.'

The meaning is, 'These men have got the cant of the day, a superficial readiness of slight and cursory conversation, a kind of frothy collection of fashionable prattle, which yet carries them through with the most light and inconsequential judgments; but if brought to the trial by the slightest breath of rational conversation, the bubbles burst; or, in other words, display their emptiness.'

37 All that passes between Hamlet and this Lord is omitted in the folio.

attend him in the hall: He sends to know, if your pleasure hold to play with Laertes, or that you will take longer time.

Ham. I am constant to my purposes, they follow the king's pleasure: if his fitness speaks, mine is ready; now, or whensoever, provided I be so able as now.

Lord. The king, and queen, and all are coming down.

Ham. In happy time.

Lord. The queen desires you, to use some gentle entertainment to Laertes, before you fall to play.

Ham. She well instructs me. *[Exit Lord.]*

Hor. You will lose this wager, my lord.

Ham. I do not think so; since he went into France, I have been in continual practice; I shall win at the odds. But thou would'st not think, how ill all's here about my heart: but it is no matter.

Hor. Nay, good my lord, — —

Ham. It is but foolery; but it is such a kind of gain-giving³⁸, as would, perhaps, trouble a woman.

Hor. If your mind dislike any thing, obey it: I will forestal their repair hither, and say, you are not fit.

Ham. Not a whit, we defy augury; there is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come: the readiness is all: Since no man, of aught he leaves, knows, what is't to leave betimes³⁹. Let be.

³⁸ i. e. misgiving, a giving against, or an internal feeling and prognostic of evil.

³⁹ ['Since no man, of aught he leaves, — knows; — What is it to leave betimes?'] This is the reading of the folio; the quarto reads, 'Since no man *has* ought of *what* he leaves. What is't to leave betimes.' *Has* is evidently here a blunder for *knows*. Johnson thus interprets the passage: — 'Since *no man knows ought* of the state which *he leaves*, since he cannot judge what other years may produce, why should we be afraid of *leaving* life betimes?' Warburton's explanation is very ingenious, but perhaps strains the poet's meaning farther than he intended. 'It is true that by death we lose all the goods of life; yet seeing this loss is no otherwise an evil than as we are sensible of it; and since death removes all sense of it, what matters it how soon we lose them.' This argument against the fear of death has been dilated and placed in a

Enter King, Queen, LAERTES, Lords, OSRIC, and Attendants, with Foils, &c.

King. Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me.

[The King puts the hand of LAERTES into that of HAMLET.]

Ham. Give me your pardon, sir: I have done you wrong; But pardon it, as you are a gentleman. This presence knows, and you must needs have heard, How I am punish'd with a sore distraction. What I have done, That might your nature, honour, and exception, Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness. Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never, Hamlet: If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away, And, when he's not himself, does wrong Laertes, Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it. Who does it then? His madness: If't be so, Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd; His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy. Sir, in this audience⁴⁰, Let my disclaiming from a purpos'd evil Free me so far in your most generous thoughts, That I have shot my arrow o'er the house, And hurt my brother.

Laer. I am satisfied in nature, Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most To my revenge: but in my terms of honour, I stand aloof; and will no reconciliation, Till by some elder masters, of known honour, I have a voice and precedent of peace, To keep my name ungor'd⁴¹: But till that time,

very striking light by the late Mr. Green — See *Diary of a Lover of Literature, Ipswich*, 1810, 4to. p. 230. — Shakspeare himself has elsewhere said, 'the sense of death is most in apprehension.'

⁴⁰ This line is not in the quarto.

⁴¹ i. e. unwounded. This is a piece of satire on fantastical honour. Though *nature* is satisfied, yet he will ask advice of older men of the sword, whether *artificial honour* ought to be contented with Hamlet's apology.

I do receive your offer'd love like love,
And will not wrong it.

Ham. I embrace it freely;
And will this brother's wager frankly play. —
Give us the foils; come on.

Laer. Come, one for me.

Ham. I'll be your foil, Laertes; in mine ignorance
Your skill shall, like a star i'the darkest night,
Stick fiery off indeed.

Laer. You mock me, sir.

Ham. No, by this hand.

King. Give them the foils, young Osric. — Cousin
Hamlet,
You know the wager?

Ham. Very well, my lord;
Your grace hath laid the odds⁴² o'the weaker side.

King. I do not fear it: I have seen you both: —
But since he's better'd, we have therefore odds.

Laer. This is too heavy, let me see another.

Ham. This likes me well: These foils have all a
length? *[They prepare to play.]*

Osric. Ay, my good lord.

King. Set me the stoups⁴³ of wine upon that table: —
If Hamlet give the first or second hit,
Or quit in answer of the third exchange,
Let all the battlements their ordnance fire:
The king shall drink to Hamlet's better breath;
And in the cup an union⁴⁴ shall he throw,

42 The king had wagered *six Barbary horses* to a few *rapiers, poniards, &c.*; that is, about *twenty* to one. These are the odds here meant. The odds the King means in the next speech were *twelve* to *nine* in favour of Hamlet, by Laertes giving him three.

43 *Stoup* is a common word in Scotland at this day, and denotes a pewter vessel resembling our wine measures; but of no determinate quantity; for there are *gallon-stoups, pint-stoups, mutchkin-stoups, &c.* The vessel in which water is fetched or kept is also called a *water-stoup*. A *stoup* of wine is therefore equivalent to a *pitcher* of wine.

44 An *union* is a precious pearl, remarkable for its size.' And hereupon it is that our dainties and delicacies here at Rome, &c. call them unions, as a man would say singular, and by themselves alone.' To swallow a pearl in a draught seems to have been com-

Richer than that which four successive kings
 In Denmark's crown have worn; Give me the cups;
 And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,
 The trumpet to the cannoneer without,
 The cannons to the heavens, the heaven to earth,
Now the king drinks to Hamlet. — Come, begin; —
 And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

Ham. Come on, sir.

Laer. Come, my lord. [*They play.*

Ham. One.

Laer. No.

Ham. Judgment.

Osr. A hit, a very palpable hit.

Laer. Well, — again.

King. Stay, give me drink: Hamlet, this pearl is
 thine;

Here's to thy health. — Give him the cup.

[*Trumpets sound; and Cannon shot off within.*

Ham. I'll play this bout first, set it by awhile.

Come. — Another hit; What say you? [*They play.*

Laer. A touch, a touch, I do confess.

King. Our son shall win.

Queen. He's fat, and scant of breath. —

Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows:

The queen carouses⁴⁵ to thy fortune, Hamlet.

Ham. Good madam, — —

King. Gertrude, do not drink.

Queen. I will, my lord; — I pray you, pardon me.

King. It is the poison'd cup; it is too late. [*Aside.*

Ham. I dare not drink yet, madam; by and by.

mon to royal and mercantile prodigality. Thus in the second part
 of 'If You Know Not Me You Know Nobody: —

'Here sixteen thousand pound at one clap goes

Instead of sugar. Gresham drinks this pearl

Unto the queen his mistress.'

According to Rondeletus pearls were supposed to have an exhilarating quality. '*Uniones quae a conchis, &c. valde cordiale sunt.*' Under pretence of throwing a pearl into the cup, the King may be supposed to drop some poisonous drug into the wine. Hamlet subsequently asks him tauntingly, 'Is the union here?'

45 i. e. the queen drinks to thy good success.

Queen. Come, let me wipe thy face.

Laer. My lord, I'll hit him now.

King. I do not think it.

Laer. And yet it is almost against my conscience.

[*Aside.*

Ham. Come, for the third, Laertes: You do but dally;
I pray you, pass with your best violence;
I am afeard, you make a wanton⁴⁶ of me.

Laer. Say you so? come on. [They play.

Osr. Nothing neither way.

Laer. Have at you now.

[LAERTES wounds HAMLET; then, in scuffling,
they change Rapiers, and HAMLET wounds
LAERTES.

King. Part them, they are incens'd.

Ham. Nay, come again. [The Queen falls.

Osr. Look to the queen there, ho!

Hor. They bleed on both sides; — How is it, my lord?

Osr. How is't, Laertes?

Laer. Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe,
Osrice;

I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.

Ham. How does the queen?

King. She swoons to see them bleed.

Queen. No, no, the drink, the drink, — O my dear Hamlet!

The drink, the drink; — I am poison'd! [Dies.

Ham. O villany! — Ho! let the door be lock'd:

Treachery! seek it out. [LAERTES falls.

Laer. It is here, Hamlet: Hamlet, thou art slain;
No medicine in the world can do thee good,
In thee there is not half an hour's life;
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,
Unbated⁴⁷, and envenom'd: the foul practice
Hath turn'd itself on me: lo, here I lie,

46 i. e. you trifle or play with me as if I were a child.

47 See note 20. on Act iv. Sc. 7.

Never to rise again: Thy mother's poison'd;
I can no more; the king, the king's to blame.

Ham. The point
Envenom'd too! — Then, venom, to thy work⁴⁹.

[*Stabs the King.*

Osr. & Lords. Treason! treason!

King. O, yet defend me, friends, I am burt hurt.

Ham. Here, thou incestuous, murd'rous, damned Dane,
Drink off this potion: — Is the union here?

Follow my mother. [King dies.

Laer. He is justly serv'd;

It is a poison temper'd by himself. —

Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet:

Mine and my father's death come not upon thee:

Nor thine on me! [Dies.

Ham. Heaven make thee free of it! I follow thee.

I am dead, Horatio: — Wretched queen, adieu! —

You that look pale and tremble at this chance,

That are but mutes or audience to this act,

Had I but time, (as this fell sergeant⁵⁰, death,

Is strict in his arrest,) O, I could tell you, —

But let it be: — Horatio, I am dead;

Thou liv'st; report me and my cause aright

To the unsatisfied.

Hor. Never believe it;

I am more an antique Roman than a Dane,

Here's yet some liquor left.

Ham. As thou'rt a man, —

Give me the cup; let go; by heaven, I'll have it. —

O God! — Horatio, what a wounded name,

48 In the quarto of 1603: —

'The poison'd instrument within my hand?

Then venom to thy venom; die, damn'd villain:

Come drink, here lies thy union here.'

[King dies.

49 A *sergeant* was a bailiff or sheriff's officer. Shakspeare, in his 47th Sonnet, has likened death to an arrest: —

'——— when that fell arrest,

Without all bail shall carry me away.'

And Joshua Silvester, in his *Dubartas*: —

'And death, sergeant of the eternal Judge,

Comes very late,' &c.

Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me?
 If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
 Absent thee from felicity awhile,
 And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
 To tell my story. —

[*March afar off, and Shot within.*

What warlike noise is this?

Osr. Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from
 Poland,
 To the ambassadors of England gives
 This warlike volley.

Ham. O, I die, Horatio;
 The potent poison quite o'er-crows⁵⁰ my spirit;
 I cannot live to hear the news from England:
 But I do prophesy, the election lights
 On Fortinbras; he has my dying voice;
 So tell him, with the occurrents, more or less,
 Which have solicited⁵², — The rest is silence. [*Dies.*

Hor. Now cracks a noble heart; — Good night,
 sweet prince;
 And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!
 Why does the drum come hither? [*March within.*

*Enter FORTINBRAS, the English Ambassadors,
 and Others.*

Fort. Where is this sight?

Hor. What is it, you would see?
 If aught of woe, or wonder, cease your search.

Fort. This quarry cries on havock⁵²! — O proud
 death!

⁵⁰ To *overcnow* is to overcome, to subdue. — 'These noblemen laboured with tooth and naile to *overcrow*, and consequently to overthrow one another.' — *Holinshed's History of Ireland*.

⁵¹ 'The *occurrents* which have solicited' — the occurrences or incidents which have incited.' The sentence is left unfinished.

⁵² 'This quarry cries on havock!' To cry on was to exclaim against.' I suppose, when unfair sportsmen destroyed more game than was reasonable, the censure was to call it *havock*.

Johnson.

Quarry was the term used for a heap of slaughtered game. See *Macbeth*, Act iv. Sc. 3.

What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,
That thou so many princes, at a shot,
So bloodily hast struck?

1 *Amb.* The sight is dismal;
And our affairs from England come too late:
The ears are senseless, that should give us hearing,
To tell him, his commandment is fulfill'd,
That Rosencrantz and Guidenstern are dead:
Where should we have our thanks?

Hor. Not from his mouth,
Had it the ability of life to thank you;
He never gave commandment for their death.
But since, so jump⁵³ upon this bloody question,
You from the Polack wars, and you from England,
Are here arriv'd; give order, that these bodies
High on a stage be placed to the view;
And let me speak, to the yet unknowing world,
How these things came about: So shall you hear
Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts⁵⁴;
Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters;
Of deaths put on⁵⁵ by cunning, and forc'd cause;
And, in this upshot, purposes mistook
Fall'n on the inventors' heads: all this can I
Truly deliver.

Fort. Let us haste to hear it.
And call the noblest to the audience.
For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune;
I have some rights of memory⁵⁶ in this kingdom,
Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me.

Hor. Of that I shall have also cause to speak,
And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more:

⁵³ It has been already observed that *jump* and *just*, or *exactly*, are synonymous. Vide note 8 on Act i. Sc. 1.

⁵⁴ 'Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts. Of sanguinary and unnatural acts, to which the perpetrator was instigated by concupiscence or 'carnal stings.' The allusion is to the murder of old Hamlet by his brother, previous to his incestuous union with Gertrude.

⁵⁵ i. e. *instigated, produced*. Instead of 'forced cause,' the quartos read 'for no cause.'

⁵⁶ i. e. some rights *which are remembered* in this kingdom.

But let this same be presently perform'd,
Even while men's minds are wild; lest more mischance,
On plots, and errors, happen.

Fort. Let four captains
Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage;
For he was likely, had he been put on,
To have prov'd most royally: and, for his passage,
The soldier's music, and the rites of war,
Speak loudly for him. —
Take up the bodies: — Such a sight as this
Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.
Go, bid the soldiers shoot. [A Dead March.

[*Exeunt, bearing off the dead Bodies; after
which, a Peal of Ordnance is shot off.*

The following scene in the first quarto, 1603, differs so materially from the revised play, that it has been thought it would not be unacceptable to the reader: —

Enter HORATIO and the Queen.

Hor. Madam, your son is safe arriv'd in Denmarke,
This letter I even now receiv'd of him,
Whereas he writes how he escap'd the danger,
And subtle treason that the king had plotted,
Being crossed by the contention of the winds,
He found the packet sent to the king of England,
Wherein he saw himself betray'd to death,
As at his next conversion with your grace.
He will relate the circumstance at full.

Queen. Then I perceive there's treason in his looks,
That seem'd to sugar o'er his villanies:
But I will sooth and please him for a time,
For murderous minds are always jealous;
But know not you, Horatio, where he is?

Hor. Yes, madam, and he hath appointed me
To meet him on the east side of the city
To-morrow morning.

Queen. O fail not, good Horatio, and withal commend me
A mother's care to him, bid him a while
Be wary of his presence, lest that he
Fail in that he goes about.

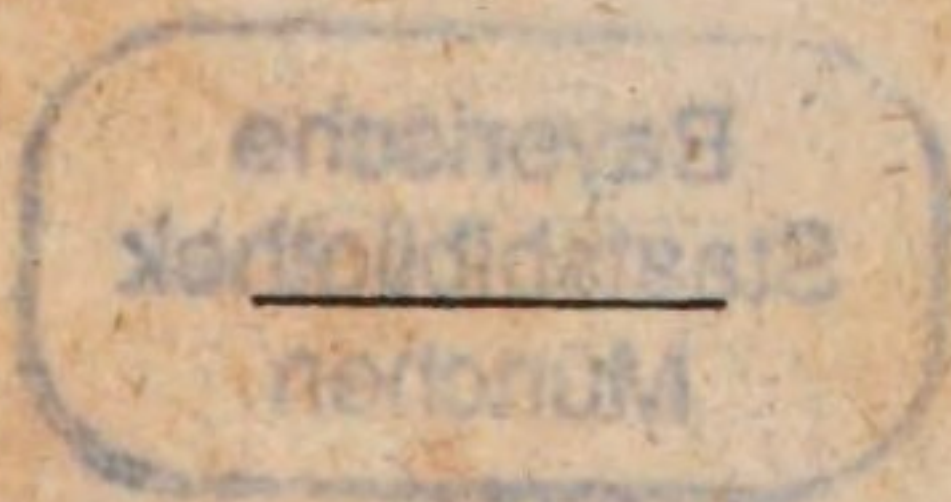
Hor. Madam, never make doubt of that:
I think by this the news be come to court
He is arriv'd: observe the king, and you shall
Quickly find, Hamlet being here,
Things fell not to his mind.

Queen. But what became of Gilderstone and Rossencraft?

Hor. He being set ashore, they went for England,
And in the packet there writ down that doom
To be perform'd on them 'pointed for him:
And by great chance he had his father's seal,
So all was done without discovery.

Queen. Thanks be to heaven for blessing of the prince.
Horatio, once again I take my leave,
With thousand mother's blessings to my son.

Hor. Madam, adieu!



If the dramas of Shakspeare were to be characterised, each by the particular excellence which distinguishes it from the rest, we must allow to the tragedy of Hamlet the praise of variety. The incidents are so numerous, that the argument of the play would make a long tale. The scenes are interchangeably diversified with merriment and solemnity: with merriment that includes judicious and instructive observations; and solemnity not strained by poetical violence above the natural sentiments of man. New characters appear from time to time in continual succession, exhibiting various forms of life and particular modes of conversation. The pretended madness of Hamlet causes much mirth, the mournful distraction of Ophelia fills the heart with tenderness, and every personage produces the effect intended, from the apparition that in the first Act chills the blood with horror, to the fop in the last, that exposes affectation to just contempt.

The conduct is perhaps not wholly secure against objections. The action is indeed for the most part in continual progression; but there are some scenes which neither forward nor retard it. Of the feigned madness of Hamlet there appears no adequate cause; for he does nothing which he might not have done with the reputation of sanity. He plays the madman most when he treats Ophelia with so much rudeness, which seems to be useless and wanton cruelty.

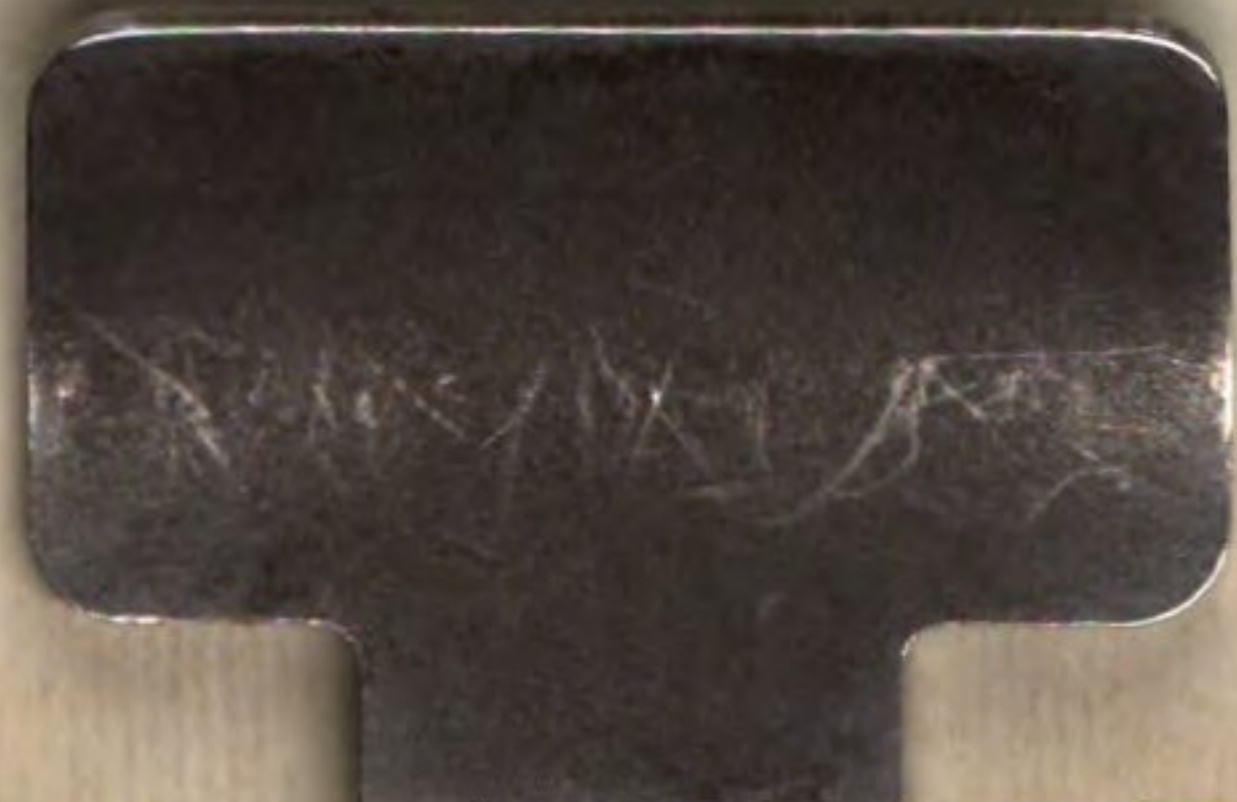
Hamlet is, through the whole piece, rather an instrument than an agent. After he has, by the stratagem of the play, convicted the King, he makes no attempt to punish him; and his death is at last effected by an incident which Hamlet had no part in producing.

The catastrophe is not very happily produced; the exchange of weapons is rather an expedient of necessity, than a stroke of art. A scheme might easily be formed to kill Hamlet with the dagger, and Laertes with the bowl.

The poet is accused of having shown little regard to poetical justice, and may be charged with equal neglect of poetical probability. The apparition left the regions of the dead to little purpose; the revenge which he demands is not obtained, but by the death of him that was required to take it; and the gratification which would arise from the destruction of an usurper and a murderer, is abated by the untimely death of Ophelia, the young, the beautiful, the harmless, and the pious.

JOHNSON.

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Shakespeare, William,

William Shakspeare's Hamlet Prince Of Denmark tragedy in five acts

Leipzig [ca. 1820]

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